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THE

BRITISH ESSAYISTS;

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

PREFACES

BIOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND CRITICAL:

By JAMES FERGUSON, Esq.

Author of the NEW BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY, &c.

A New Edition, in Forty-five Volumes.

VOL. XLI.

CONTAINING KNOX'S ESSAYS, VOL. I.

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KNOX'S ESSAYS.

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PREFACE.

AS the present differs greatly from the preceding editions, it may be necessary to give some account of the alteration: and I hope the reader will indulge what may be called the Parental Fondness of an Author, while he briefly relates the history of his work.

Many of the papers in the First Edition of the First Volume were written at College as voluntary exercises, for the sake of improvement. They had all of them an undoubted right to the epithet of juvenile. Some were composed before the Writer had left his school, and most of them before he had taken his Bachelor's degree. When they had accumulated to a number sufficient to make a volume, he debated a moment, whether he should commit them to the flames, or send them up as an adventure, without a name, to a London Publisher. Perhaps it was vanity, perhaps it was rashness, and perhaps a laudable motive, which determined him to transmit them as a gratuitous present to a Publisher. They were sent anonymously from Oxford to London, were published anonymously, nor did the Publisher know either the Writer's name or person during several months subsequent to the publication. Praise was, however, bestowed upon them from various and respectable quarters; and praise, operating like the warm sunshine on the ice, gradually relaxed his resolutions of concealment. It was not, however, without many fears and unaf-

fected diffidence, that he consented to own a child of the brain which he had intended to expose and relinquish for ever, and that he at last prefixed his name to the Second Edition. He was tempted also to add a Second Volume; and is happy in the reflection, that he has yet had no cause to repent of his compliance with the natural allurements of applause, and the kind importunity of friends and relations. The good intentions which the book evidently displayed, tended to secure it from censure, and were perhaps the chief and best causes of its commendation.

The book has now been out of print, as the mercantile phrase expresses it, a considerable time. Its writer has been informed, that it has frequently been demanded, and that many have been partial enough to express disappointment at not being able to procure it. He was, however, unwilling to accelerate the edition, so as to exclude such additions and improvements as he has been able to insert, in the midst of a constant succession of other cares and labours. His respect and gratitude to his candid Readers, has induced him to take the opportunity of New Editions, to render whatever little presents he has ventured to make them, less unworthy of acceptance.

A large number of new Papers is admitted in this Edition, and a few of the former excluded, to make room. As the arrangements of detached Papers is seldom of importance, it has been wholly changed, not indeed with the formality of a methodical plan, but fortuitously, and indeed just as the Papers happened to be revised and prepared.

He who resides at a distance from the metropolis and the press, will usually find it necessary to request the Reader to exercise his candour, as well as his sagacity, in the correction of typographical

Errata. Notwithstanding great care has been taken, it is but too probable that many errors remain, both of this and of other kinds, which an attentive Reader will indeed observe, but a courteous Reader excuse.

In the great variety of matter which these Volumes contain, it is almost impossible but that some opinions should be advanced, which many will be disposed to controvert. Men who are actuated by different hopes and fears, and whose minds have been tinctured by different principles in religion or politics, by different studies, examples, and education, will often behold manners, books, and things, through such delusive media as represent the same object in every diversity of colour. But though the book may not be exempt from erroneous or disputable assertions, the Writer dismisses it with a full confidence, that the general tendency of it is to form *honest men*, to promote the love of truth and liberty, and to recommend whatever is useful and amiable.

Tunbridge,
June 1, 1782.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL

PREFACE

TO

ESSAYS MORAL AND LITERARY.

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D. the author of these Essays, whose rank in the republic of letters has long been pre-eminent, was born at Newington Green, in Middlesex, about the year 1753. His father, the Rev. Vicesimus Knox, LL. B. a fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, and a master of Merchant Taylor's School, was a respectable scholar, a truly worthy man, and, in the exercise of his clerical functions, possessed the high esteem of several large congregations in London, who for many years enjoyed the advantage of his instruction. Mr. Knox died at the early age of forty-nine. His only

son, the subject of this memoir, became a member of the college in which his father had preceded him, where he pursued his studies with successful diligence, and in due time was elected to a fellowship. He went through a course of reading, which comprehended all the best Greek and Roman classics, and imitated the style of each, in verse and prose, with great felicity. His early compositions in Latin were numerous, and much admired in the college for wit, humour, taste, and purity of diction. The president of St. John's, a man of considerable learning, Dr. Dennis, soon discovered in Mr. Knox those indications of superior genius which were hereafter to shed lustre upon his college. He took every occasion of encouraging him in his studious pursuits, and, as a mark of honourable distinction, together with the other heads of houses, appointed him a speaker, with Mr. Bragge, the Earl of Dartmouth, Sir George Shuckburgh Evelyn, and others, at the *Encœnia*, when Lord North first presided as Chancellor of Oxford. Upon that occasion Mr. Knox met with great applause, as well from the manner in which he delivered a copy of Latin verses, as from the merit of the verses themselves, which (contrary to what usually takes place)

were known to be the speaker's composition. It was here that he gave an early specimen of those talents of elocution, that have gained him the reputation of one of the first pulpit orators of the age, and of that taste which has placed him among the most celebrated of our *belles lettres* writers. Before he left the university, and previous to his bachelor's degree, he composed several of these essays as college exercises, for the sake of improvement; and (as we are informed in the preface) when they accumulated to a number sufficient to make a volume, he debated a moment whether he should commit them to the flames, or send them (as a present) without a name to a London publisher. The last deliberation prevailed; the collection was transmitted to Mr. Edward Dilly, by whom the volume was published anonymously in 1777, under the title of "Essays Moral and Literary," royal octavo. The success of this volume was great, but unquestionably not more than its desert. A second edition was soon called for, and the author was induced not only to add another volume, but also to prefix his name. These essays, written in a forcible and elegant style, formed on the finest models of ancient Greece and Rome, contain most valu-

able directions for the cultivation of the understanding, and the conduct of life. What serves also to recommend them still more to many, is the rich fund of classical and miscellaneous entertainment they afford. It is unnecessary to enter into a copious detail of the great merits of this work; the public opinion having been so decidedly expressed in its favour, that few books are more generally known and approved. The style is masterly, and if (sometimes) a little Johnsonian, yet an accurate judge will perceive that it has the nerve of Johnson without the pomposity. There is a happy mixture of the best style of our English writers with those of Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero, in whose writings the author appears to have been daily conversant during the most susceptible part of life.

From college, after having regularly taken the degrees of bachelor and master of arts, Mr. Knox was elected in the year 1778 master of Tunbridge School, over which seminary he continued to preside, and from which he sent to various parts of the world many learned, virtuous, and highly esteemed members of society. About this time he married a lady, distinguished by her superior understanding

and peculiar elegance of manners, the daughter of Mr. Miller, a surgeon of great respectability at Tunbridge, and thus vacated his fellowship at Oxford. His family consists of two sons and a daughter. Shortly after his marriage he accepted the degree of doctor of divinity, conferred upon him by diploma from Philadelphia, without solicitation, in the handsomest manner, as a compliment for the benefit America had derived from his incomparable Essays, which were very popular there.

Dr. Knox next appeared to the world as an author, by publishing his celebrated treatise on "Liberal Education;" a subject which, of course, must at this period have much engrossed his attention. It is not easy to determine whether this treatise or the Essays conferred most honour upon the author: its reception was equally favourable in this and in foreign countries. It is certain, however, that this truly excellent work displays a depth of learning, an ingenuity of argument, and a soundness of judgment, not equalled in any other work upon the exhausted subject of education. The writings of contemporary authors, and of literary journals at home and abroad, abound in eulogiums of its merit. In this treatise

Dr. Knox evinced that independence of sentiment, which, though honourable to his character, has contributed through life to the injury of his worldly interests. In pointing out the defects in the education of youth, he could not consistently pass over the gross abuses in the discipline of his university. Abuse at Oxford had taken such fast hold by long continuance, that it required the strongest exposition to effect any reformation; Dr. Knox, therefore, arraigned it with all the force of ridicule, learning, and argument combined, and did not content himself with adducing merely general charges, but entered with a minute precision of inquiry into the sources of the corruptions which prevailed, so injurious to the whole nation. Whether in his ardent zeal for the promotion of learning, and the improvement of the rising generation, he might not have been hurried in one or two instances beyond the strict limit of candour, is now not worthy of inquiry, since beyond all question the public at large, as well as the university itself, lie under infinite obligations to him for having caused many improvements, which, since his representations were published, have been made in the discipline of Oxford. This work

was universally read, and the Oxonians were extremely galled by the celebrity with which it was received, not only in Britain, but through Europe and America. In a subsequent edition the author subjoined a letter to Lord North, chancellor of the university of Oxford. Being hopeless of doing any good in his place as a member of the academical senate, the author adopted this mode of address, with a view of exciting the chancellor's attention to the abuses which he there enumerated. The evils specified in this letter were so palpable, that it is surprising any thing like an apology for them should have been suffered to appear from the public press of the university. Yet so it was, from the university press issued "A Letter to the Rev. Vicesimus Knox, on the Subject of his Animadversions on the University of Oxford, by a resident Member of that University." Report at the time gave this furious, declamatory, but weak and affected performance, to a college tutor of no mean reputation; but it was soon found and acknowledged, even in the university itself, that he rather injured the cause than supported it. The writer loads Dr. Knox with abuse, and blinds his readers, at least the uninformed part of them, with a

pompous parade of the advantages attending the number of professors in Oxford; when he must have known, that, however respectable those learned men were as individuals, yet few of them read lectures, and fewer still attended those who did. Happily, however, the strictures of our author have been attended to by the university itself, however haughty and prejudiced against a young man's censures, and the abuses in many instances have been diminished, and in some done away. A stricter discipline has taken place, a new arrangement of academical studies, and more diligence both on the part of the professors and the students. No person can obtain his degrees without having attended the lectures; and particularly, the bishops will not admit any to holy orders unless they bring testimonials of their having regularly attended the lectures of the regius professor in divinity. A new statute has been recently made at Oxford, which there is reason to believe owes its origin to Dr. Knox's strictures, though many will (of course) be unwilling to own in public the painful obligation.

About the year 1787 Dr. Knox published a series of miscellaneous papers, under the title of "Winter Evenings," &c. three vols. octavo.

They have gone through three editions; and though they have not experienced so universal a circulation as the two former productions of this author, they equally abound in fine writing and excellent moral instruction, and afford a richly diversified store of elegant entertainment.

For the purpose of facilitating the education of youth, Dr. Knox has devoted much labour, and evinced considerable learning and judgment, in various books which he has edited for the use of schools. "The Elegant Extracts," in prose and verse; "Family Lectures, or, a Collection of Sermons," in two large volumes, octavo; and "Elegant Epistles," though compilations merely, have nevertheless conferred no small credit upon the editor, for his judicious selection and arrangement, and for the extensive utility of his plan.

In his zeal to preserve subordination in England, on the downfall of the aristocracy in France, Dr. Knox published a work entitled "Personal Nobility," containing advice, in a series of letters, to a young nobleman on the conduct of his studies, and the best means of maintaining the dignity of the peerage. This work is written in the highest strain of nervous

eloquence, and abounds in wise precepts. It is fraught with constitutional opinions, enforced in a manner which the times required. It is now become extremely scarce. Report has stated that it procured to the author the marked approbation of the most distinguished whigs, who from that time have esteemed him one of the sincerest and ablest champions of the constitution, as consisting of King, Lords, and Commons. The generous and manly spirit which it breathes might, on the other hand, give offence to parasites and sycophants, and thus obstruct its circulation, and its author's preferment.

In 1793 an event occurred in the life of Dr. Knox, which has been the subject of much misrepresentation. A sermon which he preached at Brighton, at a period when the country was in a general ferment in consequence of the French revolution, gave offence to some obscure persons, militia officers of inferior note, whose very names were not discovered, but who in a most unmanly way shewed their resentment by making a riot at the theatre, to which the doctor had accompanied his lady and family of young children a few nights afterwards. The immediate subject of this cele-

brated sermon, as appears from a statement and some letters which he published from third persons who were present at it, among which is one from the late worthy curate of Brighton, was, that "*offensive war is a high crime against humanity and Christianity.*" No allusion, it is stated by them, was made to the measures pursuing in this country. The sermon was certainly more in opposition to the spirit prevailing in France than here, notwithstanding at that period many in England were sanguine enough, no doubt, to hope to realize the march to Paris which the ministers then in power held out. It was agreed, however, on all hands, that a more eloquent discourse never was delivered from the pulpit, and indeed few have been so famous since the days of Dr. Sacheverel. The composition was elegant, the matter indisputably loyal and constitutional, strongly impressive from its classical style, and the peculiar energy, propriety, and harmony, which are known to distinguish the preacher's elocution.

The good-natured contempt with which Dr. Knox treated this unpleasant business could only have proceeded from a great mind, and a most amiable disposition. From this period

Dr. Knox seems to have devoted his few leisure hours from his school to the more momentous branch of his profession, divinity.

The reader, will, at the close of our account of this celebrated scholar and divine, expect a list of the benefices and dignities he holds as retributions for these various and highly useful labours in the service of the public we have thus cursorily enumerated; but he will be affected equally with surprise and regret to learn, that this steady defender of the church establishment, this able and strenuous advocate in the cause of religion, virtue, social order, civil government, learning, and every thing that renders life amiable or valuable, has never had any preferment bestowed upon him except the curacy of a little village, if it may be called preferment, which he has constantly supplied for a pittance ever since he was ordained by Bishop Lowth, at Christ Church, in Oxford, about 1777! We have, however, the satisfaction to add, that by his own successful industry Dr. Knox is in very easy circumstances; and he has, moreover, in private life, the happiness to enjoy the unbounded esteem of a highly respectable acquaintance.

KNOX'S ESSAYS.

No. I. *On Essay Writing.*

THOSE Sages of antiquity, who, from their improvements in knowledge, and virtue, had the least dubious claim to the appellation of wise men, were yet too modest to assume a name which had the appearance of ostentation, and rather chose to be called Philosophers, or Lovers of Wisdom. From similar motives, many of the Moderns, who have written with great skill on subjects of morality and science, have intitled their productions, Essays; a name which, though it may now convey the idea of regular treatises and dissertations, is synonymous with the word Attempts, and means no more than humble endeavours to instruct or to amuse. A writer who, at a late period, pursuing the track of those celebrated authors who preceded him, boldly promises improvement on his predecessors, is received with that indignation which arrogance, even when supported by some degree of merit, naturally excites; but he who professes only an attempt, however unsuccessful, has a claim to candour and indulgence. Failure has ceased to be ridiculous, where presumption has not made pretensions, nor confidence anticipated success.

Many works therefore, distinguished by this unassuming title, have been well received, and have obtained a very exalted place in the scale of literary

honours. None have become more popular in their own country, than those periodical papers, which were published by the Tatler, the Guardian, and the Spectator, and which have been successively imitated by later writers. The taste and morals of the nation have been more generally improved by these excellent though short and detached compositions, than by long, regular, elaborate systems. They were addressed to the heart and imagination, and fitted for the haunts of men engaged in the employments of common life; while scientific treatises of ethics were calculated only for the exercise of scholastic disputation; and their influence on the conduct of life, if they ever possessed any, was circumscribed within narrow limits. Addison, like Socrates, to whom he has often been compared, brought down knowledge from those heights which were accessible only to professed scholars, and placed it within the reach of all, who, to natural and common sense, added the advantage of a common education. He it was who stripped philosophy of that unbecoming garb in which she had been disguised by her mistaken followers, and represented her attired by the Graces, like the Goddess of Beauty.

The votaries of the severer muses have sometimes ventured to despise this entertaining species of productions, as futile and superficial. They have asserted that truth needs not embellishment, and that the ornaments which she borrows from imagination are no less unbecoming than unnecessary. But the real utility of literary labours is to be estimated by the extent of their influence on the national manners and understanding. Truth, however, when delivered with that systematic precision which is approved in the schools of philosophy, will not have charms enough to detain the common

reader who takes up a book for the amusement of a leisure hour, and who must be tempted to admit instruction, by the prospect of receiving pleasure. In every thousand of those who have been delighted with the papers of Addison, perhaps not more than one has seen the Principia of Newton. Praises adequate to the merits of so exalted a genius, as was his who discovered the true system of the universe, can scarcely be bestowed; nor is it detraction from his fame to assert, that since his theories require a painful attention to comprehend them, they will not generally be attended to, in a commercial country like our own, where only the short interval which the pursuit of gain, and the practice of mechanic arts affords, will be devoted to letters by the more numerous classes of the community. And indeed it must be confessed, that though the abstruser doctrines of philosophy may be highly interesting to the man of science, and may qualify him for a professor's chair, or a seat at the board of longitude, yet they seem not to have any tendency to render him better in his civil and social relations. I never could find that the Elements of Euclid taught any one to be a better father, husband, son, or citizen. Mathematical truth is indeed a most beautiful object of contemplation; but moral truth is better calculated to excite and reward the attention of the busy world.

The great Bacon, who pointed out the path to those sublime heights in philosophy, at which his followers have arrived, would never have brought his speculations home to men's business and bosoms, to use his own expressions, if he had not written his Essays; a work which, as it was of the most extensive consequence, and most easily understood, was the most popular of all his productions in his own country. The remarks contained in it are such

as show that he had an intimate knowledge of the human heart, and they have a tendency to direct mankind in the right conduct of life. They are the institutes of a science which all wish to learn; but how few, in comparison, are interested in the *Novum Organum?* Whether a man adopt the hypothetical or experimental philosophy is a matter of indifference to his moral conduct; nor is a Cartesian necessarily better or worse than the admirer of the more modern and more probable system. An error in physics is seldom productive of consequences injurious to one's neighbour or one's self.

Bacon discovered new tracts of learning; he gave directions to pursue them; he banished hypothesis, and introduced experiment: he is deservedly the glory of our nation, as the restorer of true philosophy; but yet, without detracting from his merits, we may express our regret that he did not bestow more time and pains on the grand science of human nature. He appears, from the specimens he has left us, to have been better qualified to advance it to perfection than any modern. The example, however, of so profound a writer, is sufficient to vindicate from the charge of futility, those little compositions, which, without the formality of studied treatises, aim at instructing the reader in the truths of ethics, of criticism, and in all the more agreeable subjects of philosophy.

In an age when books and a competent education are easily attainable, all ranks will be found to devote a considerable portion of their unemployed time to some kind of reading. But what shall they read during the interval of half an hour, interrupted perhaps by the prattle of children, or the impertinence of visitors, or the calls of business? not a long and tedious treatise, divided and subdivided, and requiring at least the unsuspended attention of half

a day, fully to comprehend the whole. They seek relaxation, but in this they find a task; irksome, because it requires close application; and unimproving, because that application can only be desultory. But hard indeed must be his lot, who, in the most active and most dissipated scenes of life, cannot bestow the small space of time required in the perusal of an Essay of a few pages. He who possesses such books as the Religion of Nature Delineated, will not easily find better guides, but yet he will oftener be tempted to take the Spectator from his shelves. He who has never thought of reading the tedious, though instructive, conferences of Arrian, has perhaps committed to memory the Enchiridion of Epictetus. Even the form, the size, the weight of the volume, are circumstances which deserve to be attended to in a subordinate degree, since they may contribute to render its influence more diffusive. Who could bear to carry a folio with him in his chariot, or recline on a sopha with a heavy quarto in his hand?

It must not, however, be supposed, that this kind of works is adapted only to the superficial reader. Many subjects of morality and learning have been concisely discussed in a few pages, with a depth, solidity, and originality of thought, rarely exceeded in any formal dissertation. The works of our English divines, the best moralists in the world, have sometimes lost their effect by their prolixity: for the mind of man, though comprehensive to a very great degree, is yet circumscribed within certain bounds, and, like a full vessel, suffers all that is superfluous to run to waste. But the periodical Essay satisfies the subject, without fatiguing the attention, or overburthening the memory.

The detached nature of these writings enables the writer to vary his style without impropriety; to

be grave or gay, humorous or severe; to lay down positive rules, or to teach by example; to speak in his own person, or to introduce an instructive tale. Every volume contains a variety of subjects treated in various manners, and suited to the dispositions of different readers, or of the same reader at different times. Thus is idleness rendered attentive, and the listless moments of leisure are filled up with the advantages of study, unmixed with the toil of formal application. The saunterer is deceived into employment, and the vicious, the dissipated, the busy, are, as it were, in spite of themselves, engaged in literary and philosophical contemplation.

Thus extensively useful and entertaining, no wonder Essays have been more universally read in the busy walks of life than any other productions. The names and works of Montaigne, of Bacon, of Temple, of Collier, of Addison, of Steele, and of their successful followers, are held in a degree of esteem, which neither the lapse of time, nor the caprice of fashion has been able to annihilate.

There is scarcely an individual, not only of those who profess learning, but of those who devote any of their time to reading, who has not perused the Spectators. Placed, however, in our hands in the earliest period of life, they have lost, in the eyes of many readers, the charm of novelty. To these perhaps new Attempts or Essays, similar at least in kind, may afford entertainment. Nor should they be checked as presumptuous, since, without the spirit of adventure, modern literature would become stationary or retrograde. The fame of those writers, however great, is but adequate to their merits; but though it is true that they have presented us with much fine gold, yet the mine is still rich, and will never be exhausted.

From the various combination of human passions,

originally few in number, an infinite variety of moral appearances is found to arise. Political revolutions, religious reformations, the whims of fashion, and the changes in literature, enable the moral writer, when he travels even in the beaten road of an Essayist, to discover prospects hitherto unobserved or not described.

The metropolis of a great empire flourishing in arts and commerce, is, as it were, the hot-bed of manners, in which every plant shoots up with forced luxuriance. In a harvest so plentiful, not only those who first apply the sickle are rewarded with abundance, but many a loaded sheaf remains to be picked up by the careful gleaner. And happily for the morals and amusement, as well as understandings of our nation, the labourers have not been few nor unsuccessful.

The present age has been called an age of literary luxury; nor let it blush at the appellation. The passion for letters is attended with the sweetest satisfactions; and the indulgence of it tends to silence the importunity of other passions, which can seldom be gratified without consequent misery.

No. II. *On Entrance into Life, and the Conduct of early Manhood.*

THERE seems to be a peculiar propriety in addressing moral precepts to the rising generation. Besides that, like travellers entering on a journey, they want direction, there are circumstances which render it probable, that instruction will be more

efficacious in youth than at a maturer period. Long habits of business or pleasure, and an indiscriminate intercourse with mankind, often superinduce a great degree of insensibility; and the battered veteran at last considers the admonitions of the moralist as the vain babbling of a sophist, and the declamation of a school-boy. The keen edge of moral perception is blunted by long and reiterated collision. To him who has lost the finer sensibilities, it is no less fruitless to address a moral discourse, than to represent to the deaf, the charms of melody, or to the blind, the beauties of a picture.

But youth possesses sensibility in perfection; and unless education has been totally neglected, or erroneously pursued, its habits are usually virtuous. Furnished with a natural susceptibility, and free from any acquired impediment, the mind is then in the most favourable state for the admission of instruction, and for learning how to live.

I will then suppose a young man present who has passed through the forms of a liberal education at school, and who is just entering on the stage of life, to act his part according to his own judgment I will address him with all the affection and sincerity of a parent, in the following manner:

"You have violent passions implanted in you by "Nature for the accomplishment of her purposes. "But do not conclude, as many have done to their "ruin, that because they are violent, they are irre-"sistible. The same Nature which gave you pas-"sions, gave you reason and a love of order. "Religion, added to the light of Nature and the "experience of mankind, has concurred in estab-"lishing it as an unquestionable truth, that the "irregular or intemperate indulgence of the pas-"sions is always attended with pain in some mode "or other, which greatly exceeds its pleasure.

" Your passions will be easily restrained from " enormous excess, if you really wish and honestly " endeavour to restrain them. But the greater part " of young men study to inflame their fury, and " give them a degree of force which they possess " not in a state of nature. They run into tempta- " tion, and desire not to be delivered from evil. " They knowingly and willingly sacrifice to mo- " mentary gratifications, the comfort of all which " should sweeten the remainder of life. Begin then " with most sincerely wishing to conquer these sub- " tle and powerful enemies which you carry in your " bosom. Pray for divine assistance. Avoid soli- " tude the first moment a loose thought insinuates " itself, and hasten to the company of those whom " you respect. Never converse on subjects which " lead to impure ideas. Have courage to decline " reading immoral books, even when they fall into " your hands. If you form a strong attachment to a " virtuous woman, dare to marry early. It is better " to be poor than wicked. Cherish the object of " your early love. Be industrious, and trust in " Providence.

" Thus shall you avoid the perpetual torments of " unruly affection, the most loathsome of diseases, " and the thousand penalties of selfish celibacy. " Thus shall you please God and your own heart, if " it is a good one; and displease none but an ill- " judging and wicked world, and perhaps a few of " your covetous relations.

" But really you have not so much to fear from the " violence of the concupiscible affections, when un- " assisted by voluntary compliance, as from vanity. " The perverse ambition of arriving at the charac- " ter of a man of spirit by vicious audacity, has of " late universally prevailed, and has ruined the " greater part of the British youth. I have known

" many young men proud of the impurest of dis-
" tempers, and boasting of misfortunes which are
" attended with the greatest pain and misery, and
" ought to be accompanied with shame. Far more
" have taken pains to shine, amidst the little circle
" of their vicious acquaintance, in the character of
" gay libertines, than to acquire, by useful qualities,
" the esteem of the good. From vanity, are health
" and peace sacrificed, fortunes lavished without
" credit or enjoyment, every relative and personal
" duty neglected, and religion boldly set at defiance.
" To be admitted into the company of those who
" disgrace the family title which they inherit, thou-
" sands plunge into debauchery without pas-
" sion, into drunkenness without convivial enjoy-
" ment, into gaming without the means or inclina-
" tion for play. Old age rapidly advances. When
" vanity at length retreats from insult and from
" mortification, avarice succeeds; and meanness,
" and disease, and disgrace, and poverty, and dis-
" content, and despair, diffuse clouds and darkness
" over the evening of life. Such is the lot of those
" who glory in their shame, and are ashamed of
" their glory.

" Have sense and resolution enough, therefore,
" to give up all pretensions to those titles of a fine
" fellow, a rake, or whatever vulgar name the tem-
" porary cant of the vicious bestows on the distin-
" guished libertine. Preserve your principles, and
" be steady in your conduct. And though your
" exemplary behaviour may bring upon you the
" insulting and ironical appellation of a Saint, a
" Puritan, or even a Methodist, *persevere.* It will
" be your turn in a few years, not indeed to in-
" sult, but to pity. Have spirit. Shew your Spirit.
" But let it be that spirit which urges you to pro-
" ceed against all opposition in the path in which

" you were placed by the faithful guide of your in-
" fancy and early youth. Display a noble superi-
" ority in daring to disregard the spiteful and artful
" reproaches of the vain, who labour to make you
" a convert to folly, in order to keep them in coun-
" tenance. They will laugh at first, but esteem you
" in their hearts, even while they laugh, and, in the
" end, revere your virtue.

" Let that generous courage which conscious
" rectitude inspires, enable you to despise and neg-
" lect the assaults of ridicule. When all other
" modes of attack have failed, ridicule has suc-
" ceeded. The bulwark of virtue, which has stood
" firmly against the weapons of argument, has tot-
" tered on its basis, or fallen to the ground, at the
" slightest touch of magic ridicule. In the college,
" in the army, in the world at large, it is the power-
" ful engine which is used to level an exalted cha-
" racter. You will infallibly be attacked with it, if
" you are in any respects singular; and singular in
" many respects you must be, if you are eminently
" virtuous.

" Love truth, and dare to speak it at all events.
" The man of the world will tell you, you must dis-
" semble; and so you must, if your objects and
" pursuits are as mean and as selfish as his. But
" your purposes are generous; and your means of
" obtaining them are therefore undisguised. You
" mean well. Avow your meaning, if honour re-
" quires the avowal, and fear nothing. You will
" indeed do right to wish to please; but you will
" only wish to please the worthy; and none but
" worthy actions will effect that purpose. With
" respect to that *art of pleasing* which requires the
" sacrifice of your sincerity, despise it as the base
" quality of flatters, sycophants, cheats, and scoun-

" drels. An habitual liar, besides that he will be " known and marked with infamy, must possess a " poor and pusillanimous heart; for lying originates " in cowardice. It originates also in fraud; and a " liar, whatever may be his station, would certainly, " if he were sure of secrecy, be a thief. Sorry am " I to say, that this habit is very frequent in the " world; even among those who make a figure in " the realms of dissipation; among those, whose " *honour* would compel them to stab you to the " heart, if you were to tell them plainly so mortify- " ing a truth, that you convict them of a lie.

" With all your good qualities, unite the humility " of a Christian. Be not morose. Be cautious of " overvaluing yourself. Make allowances for the " vices and errors which you will daily see. Re- " member that all have not had the benefit of moral " instruction; that a great part of mankind are in " effect orphans turned loose into the wide world, " without one faithful friend to give them advice; " left to find their own way in a dark and rugged " wilderness, with snares, and quicksands, and " chasms, around them. Be candid therefore, and, " among all the improvements of education and " refinements of manners, let the beautiful Christian " graces of Meekness and Benevolence shine most " conspicuous. Wherever you can, relieve distress, " prevent mischief, and do good; but be neither " ostentatious, nor censorious.

" Be cheerful, and gratefully enjoy the good " which Providence has bestowed upon you. But " be moderate. Moderation is the law of enjoy- " ment. All beyond is nominal pleasure and real " pain.

" I will not multiply my precepts. Choose good " books, and follow their direction. Adopt reli-

" gious, virtuous, manly principles. Fix them " deeply in your bosom, and let them go with you " unloosened and unaltered to the grave.

" If you follow such advice as, from the pure " motive of serving you most essentially, I have " given you, I will not indeed promise that you " shall not be unfortunate, according to the com- " mon idea of the word ; but I will confidently as- " sure you, that you shall not be unhappy. I will " not promise you worldly success, but I will en- " gage that you shall deserve it, and shall know " how to bear the want of it."

No. III. *Classical Learning vindicated.*

A FEW men of wit, who, in a long intercourse with the fashionable world, had probably forgotten that little knowledge of the ancient languages and authors which they had acquired at school, have endeavoured to bring into discredit the prevailing mode of education, which devotes so much time to the study of Grecian and Roman literature. Possessed of natural parts, they have, perhaps, besides, enjoyed all those advantages of good company and extensive commerce with the living world, which both excite, and give occasion to display, great abilities. They became, therefore, distinguished characters in their time, though their solid attainments were few, and greatly defective. But, whatever figure they made, they would have shone with still greater lustre, if they had retained a tinc-

ture of that elegance and liberality of sentiment which the mind acquires by a study of the classics, and which contributes more to form the true Gentleman, than the substituted ornaments of modern affectation.

The example of these illustrious, but superficial personages, has induced every prater, who has been taught to lisp broken French, and dance a minuet, to laugh at the lubberly boy, as he calls him, who spends a dozen years at school, in learning Greek and Latin. He unfairly represents this time, as spent solely in acquiring the languages, ignorant that a taste is often formed in it for those authors, which may furnish the purest and the most elegant pleasures during the remainder of life.

The pert vivacity of assured ignorance has often persuaded the fond mother to discard the tutor for the dancing-master; to be more solicitous that the hopes of the family, the heir, perhaps, to a title, an estate, and even a share of legislation, should be taught to hold up his head, than be furnished with those ideas and principles, which would render him truly happy in himself, and an honour and advantage to his friends and to his country.

Even among those who are fully sensible of the necessity of improving the beauties of the mind, as well as the graces of the person, there prevails a predilection for modern languages and modern literature to the exclusion of the ancient. In the idea of these, a sufficient stock of historical knowledge is to be gained by an attention to the events of the two or three last centuries; and a sufficient acquaintance with philosophy and polite learning, from a perusal of the writers of France and Italy. Collections of letters and state-papers, and the epigrammatic narratives of the Historian of Ferney, are to supply the place of Herodotus, Thucydides,

and Livy. Ariosto, Tasso, and Boileau, are to be read in preference to Homer, Virgil, and Horace; and the works of Voltaire alone to be substituted in the place of all the poetry, all the philosophy, and all the history that has ever been written. In consequence of these mistaken notions, our great grammar-schools, which have produced so many ornaments of human nature, are exploded by many, as the seats of illiberal manners and of antiquated learning.

In answer to the charge, that illiberal manners are the disgraceful characteristic of boys educated in grammar-schools, I must confess I am pleased with the natural simplicity of that age of sprightliness and inexperience; nor do I know a sight more truly ridiculous, than that of a boy of fourteen affecting the Graces, and behaving among his superiors in age and attainments, with all the disgusting ease of self-sufficiency. The same natural good sense which makes the boy act in character, will teach the man a manly behaviour. And I believe every judicious person had rather see his son, while very young, partaking in the noisy mirth of his school-fellows, than bowing and grinning in the insipid circle of a card-party.

With respect to the other charge, that a learned education is a little out of fashion in some polite circles, we confess and lament that it is true. But though we allow fashion to dictate without control the exact dimensions of a buckle or a head-dress, yet a regard for the honour and happiness of human nature induces us to dispute her sovereign authority in those things on which depend the manners and sentiments of a rising generation.

If, however, it is granted, that the true gentleman, that is, the man of enlarged notions and polished taste, cannot, by any method of education, be so

well formed, as by the classical; yet it by no means follows, that those whose happiness must, in a great measure, depend on less comprehensive views of men and things, should be instructed in the same mode. The time that is usually spent in Lilly's Grammar, and in acquiring just so much knowledge of the Latin language as may inspire a young man with vanity, but which cannot enable him to enter into the spirit of an author, is certainly ill bestowed. He who is designed for a vulgar walk of life had much better be reading Wingate's Arithmetic than Cordery's Colloquies, and learning the Rule of Three than the Syntax.

The mistakes of well-meaning ignorance are to be pitied and excused. But how shall we apologise for those who move in a higher sphere, and who cannot but know, that the greatest men our nation has produced, whether greatness is estimated by power, wealth, title, knowledge, or virtue, have laid the foundation of their eminence in our grammar-schools, where little else was taught but classical learning? how shall we apologise for these, when they slight a mode of education which the experience of ages has proved to be efficacious, and adopt a new one, which, from its superficial nature, cannot form the man of dignity, or of just taste? Would a More, for instance, a Sidney, a Raleigh, a Milton, a Temple, and many others, have attained to that perfection of character, at which they aspired and arrived, if they had been educated in the superficial modes?

Some leading authors seem to have wished that all our literary inquiries should be limited to that period which they are pleased to distinguish by calling it the age of Lewis XIV. It is indeed a shining interval in the revolutions of time; but most of the great characters that appeared in it, were formed

on the models of a better age, the age of Augustus, or of Pericles. And I know not, whether the glorious reign of our own Elizabeth might not exhibit examples of probity and learning, valour and patriotism, fitter for the imitation of an Englishman, than those of any epoch in the annals of our rival nation.

While, however, we reprobate the idea of confining attention to the writings and transactions of the last three hundred years, it must be confessed that this period deserves regard. The inventions of the compass, of printing, of gunpowder, and a consequent spirit of enterprize, have rendered modern times peculiarly interesting. During this period, the French nation, to use their own idea, have been remarkably awakened; nor will any man of letters, with just pretensions to taste, rest satisfied, without reading the works of Fenelon, of Boileau, and of many others who have written in the true spirit of the ancients. He will, after all, acknowledge, that they are but imitations of those originals, which are no less open to us than they were to them; and will confess it to be a want of spirit, to drink at the distant stream, when we have access to the fountain. If we can be contented with Imitations, we have excellent ones in the works of Pope and Addison. But what sculptor would be satisfied with examining the plaster bust, who was at liberty to walk in the Florentine gallery?

There is certainly something in the character of an Englishman analogous to the disposition of an old Roman. He has a natural generosity, and love of independence. He has also a gravity of temper, better adapted to mental and moral improvement, than any other; because more capable of fixed attention. French vivacity is foreign to his nature; fashion, indeed, makes him sometimes adopt it, but it sits awkwardly on him, lessens his inward con-

sciousness of dignity, and lowers him no less in the estimation of others. The ideas of a Roman are congenial to him. His mind, when cultivated by a classical education, shoots up to maturity with the vigour of an indigenous plant, but thrives slowly, like the exotic, when nurtured only by the slender supplies of foreign and superficial instruction.

The polish of external grace may indeed be deferred till the approach of manhood. When solidity is obtained by pursuing the modes prescribed by our forefathers, then may the file be used. The firm substance will bear attrition, and the lustre then acquired will be durable. A sensible father, who is not himself a convert to the effeminacy of the times, had rather see a son forming himself as a scholar and a man, on the example of an old Roman or Athenian, than imitating, in his writings and actions, the undignified vivacity of nations which have been taught by their philosophy to degrade human nature.

Surely, no one will deny that the two principal objects in a well-conducted education, are, to cultivate a good heart, and to give the understanding such additional strength and information as may safely direct the heart in the various events of life, and teach the possessor of it to act up to the comparative dignity of human nature. But attainments merely ornamental have little tendency to accomplish either of these purposes. On the contrary, as they add a lustre without solidity, they induce idleness to content itself with the appearances of merit, which are easily assumed, and to neglect the reality, as attainable only by a painful and unostentatious application. They inspire confidence without worth to support it; they give an air of insolent superiority which often defeats even the purpose of pleasing; and however they may cause admiration in the dissipated and superficial, they are little esteemed by

those whose applause is valuable, men of approved virtue and dispassionate reflection. They are then only useful and truly graceful when they tend to render good characters more conspicuously amiable.

No. IV. *On the Wisdom of aiming at Perfection.*

THE infirmity of human nature is a topic on which the profligate love to enlarge. They are apt to deduce an argument from it no less injurious than fallacious. They infer from the concession that man is naturally weak and corrupt, that the precepts of strict morality are utterly useless, and originate in one of the main proofs of human imbecility, an ill-grounded pride.

Man is indeed a weak creature; but he is also an improveable creature. He has strong passions; but he has also strong powers within him to counteract their operation. He possesses reason; and his happiness certainly depends upon the voluntary use or abuse, the neglect or the exertion, of this faculty.

It seems probable, that they who urge the inefficacy of philosophical and moral precepts, are only endeavouring to excuse their own indolence. They who feel themselves little inclined to correct their misconduct, are very solicitous to persuade themselves that they are unable.

Indeed, wherever human creatures are found, there also are to be found vice and misery. Nor is this appearance only among the rude and the illiterate, but among those who are adorned with all the

arts of human knowledge. Observation affords many examples of those, who, after having recommended virtue in the most forcible manner with all the appearance of sincerity, have at last fallen into the disgrace and wretchedness of singular profligacy. Contrary to their conviction, their interest, their character, to all that seemed estimable in their own eyes, they have descended from the towering heights of virtue into the abysses of vice.

Such instances do indeed often occur, and they are usually blazoned and exaggerated by triumphant delinquency. In many cases of degeneracy, it is probable that the appearances of virtue were insincere. But allowing, what indeed the uniform decisions of observation, reason, and religion, clearly declare, that human nature is weak in the extreme; yet I would draw a different conclusion from that which is deduced by the patrons of libertinism.

The nature of man is extremely infirm; therefore I argue, let every effort be made to acquire strength. It cannot be said that the endeavour must of necessity be abortive; it cannot be said that we have not natural incitements sufficient to encourage a vigorous attempt. We have nice sensibilities of moral rectitude, we have a natural love of excellence, we have intellectual powers capable of infinite improvement, we have precepts innumerable, and, to the honour of human nature, let it be added, that examples also greatly abound.

Many individuals, who inrolled themselves among the severer sects of ancient philosophy, have exhibited most animating proofs of the strength of human nature. It is not to be supposed that they possessed faculties more in number, or more perfect in their kind, than the present race. But they loved excellence, and they believed that they were capable of it. That belief operated most favourably

on their exertion. They succeeded in their attempts, and stand forth among mankind like colossal statues amid a collection of images less than the life.

I hope therefore it will be rendering an effectual service to mankind, if I can revive this belief among the gay and the dissipated. Philosophers have already received it; but philosophers are to the rest of mankind what a drop of water is to an ocean. The pretended philosophers are numerous indeed; but they commonly divulge opinions which tend to degrade and vilify human nature. Popularity seems to be more their object than the sublime satisfaction of discovering and communicating useful truth. But were the generality of mankind convinced that they are capable of arriving at high degrees of excellence, and consequently led to aspire at it, moral evil would certainly decrease, and society would assume a fairer appearance. Much misery and much evil of all kinds will always be in it, during this sublunary state; but that share of it which is obstinately and presumptuously occasioned by our own folly, may certainly be removed by the correction of that folly.

What is done in the works of art may be effected in morals. Were a musical instrument to be placed in the hands of a peasant who had never heard or seen one, and were he told that he might, if he were to attend to it, call forth sounds from it which would delight every hearer, he would not be induced by any argument to believe the possibility of it. Yet let him regularly learn and practise a due time, and he will arrive at a degree of skill, which, though far from perfection, will appear miraculous on comparison with his original inability. So in life, if you inform your disciple that he is able to reach a great degree of excellence, and urge him

to the attempt, he will infallibly make great advances, and improve to his own astonishment. But indulge his natural indolence, timidity, or despair, by expatiating on the irremediable weakness of human nature, and you effectually preclude even his endeavours, and add to his natural imbecility.

In the works of art, in sculpture, and in painting, in the subordinate operations of mechanical ingenuity, to what perfection does the hand of man attain? When a savage sees a watch, he adores it as a God. No earnestness of assertion would convince him that it was the work of a creature in all respects like himself, except in acquired dexterity. And can man improve himself so highly in the manual arts, in science, and in the productions of taste, and be unable to arrive at real and solid improvement in the finest art and the noblest science, the art and the science of conducting life? Half the attention and the constancy which is displayed in acquiring skill in an occupation by which money is to be gained, if bestowed on the melioration of the morals, would usually produce a most laudable character.

The state of things is so constituted, that labour, well bestowed and properly directed, always produces a valuable effect. Away then with the philosophy which increases the weakness of our nature, by representing it as insuperable. Our personal excellence and happiness, our friends and our country, are greatly interested in exploding the pusillanimous philosophy. We shall indeed often fall; but let us rise again undejected. Our failings will be great, but great also may be our virtues. At least, according to an old and just observation, by aiming at absolute perfection, we shall approach it much more nearly than if we sat down inactive through despair.

The modern philosophers and their disciples, while they assert the inefficacy of philosophy, of moral precepts, of religious influence, are inclined to maintain, that the effect which these only pretend to produce, may be produced by *modern honour*. I would only, in reply to their insinuation, ask them these questions: Who are the persons who openly and proudly commit deeds at which the child of nature, even the savage, would shudder; who is guilty of the meanest, cruellest seduction; who wears a sword ready to plunge it into the heart of his dearest friend for a trifling provocation; who is ready to glory in breaking the peace of conjugal life, and ruining a family for the gratification of lust or vanity? Unerring experience replies, Men of Honour; all, all honourable men.

From such delusion let the untainted mind of youth hasten to escape. To religion and morality let it fly for solid comfort, and for those assistances which can alone repair the ruins made in the glorious fabric of human nature by the fall of Adam. With our utmost endeavours, both reason and divinity inform us we shall be at last greatly defective. Whither then shall we go for succour? whither shall we turn to find that which shall support our weakness, and supply our defects? Philosophy is often vain, but religion never. To the Deity we must have recourse, who will certainly strengthen us by his grace, and pardon our involuntary failures, of his infinite mercy.

No. V. *On the Fear of appearing Singular.*

FEW among mankind are able, and perhaps fewer are willing, to take the trouble of preserving with consistency a system of principles purely of their own selection. They separate themselves into large divisions, which, like the flock conducted by the sheep and bell, implicitly tread in the footsteps of some distinguished leader. Thus is the pain of consulting the judgment in every emergency easily avoided. The road becomes a beaten and a wide one, and each individual knows where to step, only by seeing where another has stept before him.

But if the chosen leader is a treacherous or injudicious guide, the followers must inevitably be led into evil. Now it unfortunately happens, that the leaders, who are the most likely to attract the more numerous herds, are the least likely to possess the more valuable qualities. For what is it which chiefly attracts popular notice? Vanity and effrontery. But these qualities imply dispositions obviously inconsistent with an eminent and solid virtue; though almost always united with showy, superficial, and deceitful ornaments. Thus it happens, that the fashionable modes of thinking and living, whatever modes in the vicissitudes of human affairs assume that name, will seldom bear the test of inquiry, without discovering that they are futile and culpable. For who, indeed, was the great legislator who established them? Some rich man, or some titled lady, distinguished for boldness, but not for excellence; vain, presumptuous, and dictatorial, though qualified neither by nature,

parts, nor education, to prescribe to others; and elevated to empire by a concurrence of favourable contingencies with their own aspiring efforts. Once seated on the throne, their edicts are arbitrary and irresistible. With the authority of their signature there is no deformity which will not assume the appearance of beauty, no vice which will not appear with all the confidence which naturally belongs to virtue, but which the delicacy of virtue is too apt to conceal.

The subjects of these self-erected tyrants are most truly slaves, though voluntary slaves; but as slavery of any kind is unfavourable to human happiness and improvement, I will venture to offer a few suggestions, which may induce the subjugated tribes to revolt, and claim their invaluable birthright, their natural liberty.

To select a model for imitation is one of the best methods of facilitating the acquisition of any excellence. A living model not only shows what is to be done, but how. The imitation must not however be servile. A servile imitation is that which obeys the dictates of the master without venturing to inquire into the reason of it. The servile imitator paces in the same round, like the mill-horse, whose eyes are hoodwinked, that he may not be allured by intervening objects to deviate from the tedious circle into a path of his own choice.

It may not be improper to premise, that to one individual his own natural rights and possessions, of whatever kind, are as valuable as those of another are to that other. It is his own happiness which is concerned in his choice of principles and conduct. By these he is to stand, or by these to fall.

In making this important choice, then, let the sense of its importance lead him to assert the rights of man. These rights will justify him in acting and

thinking, as far as the laws of that community, whose protection he seeks, can allow, according to the suggestions of his own judgment. He will do right to avoid adopting any system of principles, or following any pattern of conduct, which his judgment has not pronounced conducive to his happiness, and consistent with his duties; consistent with those duties which he owes to his God, to his neighbour, to himself, and to his society. Though the small circle with whom he is personally connected may think and act differently, and may even despise and ridicule his singularity, yet let him persevere. His duty, his freedom, his conscience, and his happiness, must appear to every man, who is not hoodwinked, superior to all considerations.

Men act wrong scarcely less often from the defect of courage, than of knowledge and of prudence. Dare to be wise, said an ancient; in order to which, it will first be necessary to dare to be singular. But in this and every other effort of virtue, it must not be extended beyond the golden mean. The singularity which I recommend will be as distant from moroseness and misanthropy, and from *ridiculous oddity*, as it will from an unmanly and pernicious submission to those who possess no reasonable right to take the lead.

If the immoderate fear of appearing singular is injurious to health, to fortune, to peace of mind, and to rational enjoyment, as perhaps on a farther consideration it will appear to be, I shall contribute something to promote happiness, by daring to be so singular as to recommend singularity.

Of the many young men who impair their constitutions by early excess and debauchery, a great part is instigated to irregularity by other motives than the impulses of passion. A young man just introduced into the company of his equals enter-

tains a natural and a laudable desire to recommend himself to their favour. If they indulge in wine to excess, or in any other intemperance, he must do so likewise; for he cannot bear to be singular; and has, besides, received among his prudential rules, that he is to do as the rest do, wherever he may be fixed; and who indeed will dare to disobey the precept which commands us, While we are at Rome, to do as they do at Rome? Thus is the favour of our temporary companions gained; but our health, which was designed to endure, and with proper management would have endured, till the regular decays of nature, is greatly injured, or totally destroyed. I will then venture to exhort the young man, not so much to dread the imputation of singularity, as to endanger the loss of that which can seldom be completely regained, and without which no favour, no applause, no popularity, can give to life its natural sweetness.

With respect to that ruin which consists in the loss of fortune and the accumulation of debt, it is daily effected by the fear of singularity. However their finances may have declined, they who are whirled in the vortex of fashion, cannot retrench. They must act as their equals act; they must, like others, dress, keep a table, an equipage, and resort to public diversions. It is *necessary*, according to their ideas; and they tacitly acknowledge the obligation to be much greater than that of the moral duties. For who could bear to be *odd* people, to descend among the tribes of those whom no body knows, and who indeed are distinguished only for the plain qualities of probity and decency? Indulgencies and extravagancies are thus allowed, not altogether for the pleasure they afford, but often from the horror of singularity. It is to be wished, that the horror of a bankruptcy, a gaol, an elope-

ment, or a pistol, possessed even half the influence.

In destroying health and fortune, it certainly destroys that peace of mind, without which all external advantages whatever are but like music and paintings, banquets and perfumes, to him who has lost all powers of perception. But supposing health and fortune to be preserved, yet the fear of singularity will lead to omissions and commissions which will one day hurt a conscience not entirely insensible. Religion and duty enjoin many things which are real solecisms and downright barbarisms in the school of fashion.

When health, fortune, and peace, are gone, it may be justly said, no arguments are necessary to prove that there can be no enjoyment. But supposing them not entirely renounced, and that room were left for some degree of happiness, even that little would be greatly lessened by a too scrupulous fear of deviating from the arbitrary standard of a fantastic mode. The tastes, fancies, inclinations of other men, cannot please us like the genuine choice of our native feelings, directed by our own judgment. They may indeed be adopted, and even loved; but an adopted child seldom excites and soothes our sensibilities in a degree equal to that which is caused by our own.

Upon the whole, I cannot help thinking, that however Pride may vaunt herself, and Fashion may assume airs of superior wisdom in her choice, it is singularly foolish, absurd, and wicked, to decline any practices and any habits, however unusual, which tend to render one singularly learned, singularly good, and singularly happy.

No. VI. *On the Injustice and Cruelty of the Public Prints.*

A FREE country is that in which not only the life and the property of every individual, but his reputation also, which is often dearer to him than both, is secured by efficient laws. That country is not the land of perfect liberty, however it may arrogate the name, in which the character of every member may be traduced at pleasure in the most public manner, without redress, and without the possibility of an adequate exculpation. Oppression of the people may proceed from the people, as well as from the throne. The liberty of the press is pregnant with advantages; but the licentiousness of it teems with evils which almost counterbalance them. It is true, that the liberty of the press is essential to civil liberty. But why do we estimate the enjoyment of civil liberty as one of the greatest of human blessings? Confessedly because it allows the natural and reasonable possession of all the rights and privileges of man, in his individual and connected state; because it secures to him the enjoyment of all which God, and reason, and nature, and his relative situation, have taught him to hold dear. That kind and degree, therefore, of liberty which cannot be secured without endangering all these, certainly frustrates the primary purpose of a free constitution. Liberty, under such circumstances, operates on human happiness with all the malignant influence of real despotism.

Our own country is constitutionally the freest on the face of the globe. If there is any oppression in

it, it proceeds from the people, and operates on themselves. And there is a species of oppression peculiarly cruel and unjust, as it often falls heaviest on the good, the peaceable, and the inoffensive.

It is true indeed, that, in this free country, we have laws for the punishment of defamation; but nothing is more easy than to evade them. They do indeed sometimes prevent an open attack; but they cannot preclude the various and indirect methods of disseminating calumny, which ingenuity, stimulated by malice or the hope of gain, can easily invent.

The laws of the Twelve Tables made defamation a capital crime. The punishment was rigorous. It appeared so in the age of Augustus, and was changed to corporal chastisement. It was again rendered capital in the reign of Valentinian; and the severity with which so wise a people as the Romans have treated this crime, from the earliest to the latest period of the empire, evidently shows how deep a sense they entertained of its malignant influence on the happiness of society.

Our laws are indeed less severe. We are justly jealous of our liberty. I will not suggest an idea which can tend to the infringement of that liberty. I am grateful to Providence for having placed me in a country where it so gloriously prevails. There is no sacrifice, consistent with innocence, which a good man would not make, to hand down the blessings derived from our fathers, undiminished to our children. What I now say, tends most effectually to preserve them inviolate: for, to express my ideas in the words of the learned Blackstone, *to censure the licentiousness, is to maintain the liberty, of the press.*

Let, therefore, the laws remain unaltered, if the alteration is attended with danger. I will only ap-

peal to the hearts, the manners, and the understandings of my readers, for the voluntary reformation which I would effect; a reformation to be begun and completed by themselves, and which, instead of impairing civil liberty, will enlarge it, and will render it a diffusive good, almost unalloyed with evil: A rare condition of human felicity!

With respect to the writers and the publishers of calumny, they have usually but one or two objects in view; either the gratification of malice, or the earning of a morsel of bread. But hunger and passion are powerful incitements. The whispers of reason, and justice, and humanity, will scarcely be heard amidst the clamours of assailants so importunate. From them, therefore, we seek not redress by expostulation. We apply to the liberal sentiments of a people truly free, who value their freedom, and who possess sense enough to take the most effectual methods for its security. They will renounce the poor pleasure which they receive from the gratification of an improper curiosity, when they find that it cannot be gratified without rendering the liberty of the press a source of misery to the most deserving in the community; when they find that the people's licentiousness more effectually saps the foundation of liberty, than the ambition of a king.

Let us turn our attention to the origin and progress of that species of publication, which, within a few years, has become a general cause of complaint among all the moderate and the well-principled. A mechanic, after a servile apprenticeship, sets up for himself in the art of printing; an art which, when honourably exercised, is singularly useful and estimable; but, like many other arts, it is over-run by its professors. The young adventurer therefore finds it necessary to strike a bold stroke, as it is

termed, in order to procure profit and distinction. If he has friends, and can raise money, and institute a partnership, he engages in a news-paper. In order to gain notice, it must not at first be moderate, but must abound in *abuse, and in anecdote.* A letter-box is fixed to the window of some of the most public streets in the metropolis. Into this receptacle every dark assassin is tacitly invited to throw his poisoned dose. No man is so virtuous as not to have failings. No man is so inconsiderable as not to have enemies. Here then is an opportunity of exposing those secrets, which perhaps the confidence of a friend has made known to the treacherous divulger of them, and of gratifying the malice of a coward with safety, and by the infliction of the cruellest injury; that malice which was perhaps excited only by a superior degree of excellence. And who is to sit in judgment on what is received? Those who are often attentive to their interest alone. The papers are submitted to the consideration of some dark conclave; and if it seems good to the invisible agents who sit in it, the tale of infamy, the oblique insinuation, the whisper of suspicion, the invention of the wanton, the belief of the credulous, the virulence of revenge, private pique, and public resentment, are in a few hours scattered over the empire.

In this manner the public erects a despot over themselves. One of their own order, and sometimes one of the obscurest persons in it, institutes a tribunal, where sentence is pronounced on all, frequently without due examination, and with little regard either to justice or to mercy. No other limits are assigned to the severe decree, which is issued out to brand with infamy the best of characters, than those which are necessary to escape the letter of the law, and elude the possibility of a suc-

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cessful prosecution. So unmanly and so cruel are the decisions of this arbitrary tribunal, that even female innocence is often punished with its severest sentences. Virgin purity and conjugal virtue are blackened with aspersions which can scarcely ever be wiped off. Wounds are inflicted on the parent's heart which no time can heal: for one great misfortune attending this mode of scandal is, that though all are ready to listen to the calumny, few have candour and patience to hear and admit the vindication. Many see the attack, who never see the defence. Even if the vindication were as generally received as the abuse, it is a cruel necessity to be forced reluctantly forward on the public eye, to be obliged to answer severe and groundless charges, brought by those who have no right, either by the laws of God or of man, to disseminate throughout the world an unprovoked accusation. Can that government be well regulated where a mechanic is able to erect himself into an oppressive tyrant, to wound the heart of the innocent, break the peace of families, blacken the brightest characters, detract from the most allowed merit, degrade and lower every rank and dignity; and all this, not only with impunity, but with such rewards from the public as enable him to amass an independent fortune, and laugh over the ruins on which he has erected his prosperity.

Many among us are heard to complain of the incroachments of government on the liberty of the subject, and of the oppressions of an administration. I ask every individual in the British empire, Whether he ever experienced a single act of oppression from the crown, or the ministers of the crown, equal to that which is daily and hourly inflicted, in the most arbitrary manner, by an Editor of a licentious public paper? The severe punishments of the law

cannot be inflicted by any power known to our constitution without a formal process, even on those who deserve them. But the operations of this engine of oppression, in the hands of an interested plebeian, unappointed, unauthorized, and unoffended, inflict the severest penalty, without judge, jury, witnesses, conscience, or humanity.

The man who is guilty of this violation of every social law, shall in the mean time think himself, and be thought by others, an honest man, and even a patriot; shall riot in plenty amidst friends and riches; while he who takes from me my purse, and the trash which it contains, perishes by the halter. All this is tolerated by a sensible and a humane people, because, by the abuse of language, the licentiousness of the press is called its liberty.

I will not enlarge on the diabolical malignity of party and political abuse, which flows through these dirty channels. Malignant as it is in its nature and origin, it is in this age too much despised to effect much mischief. It as naturally pursues a minister or a successful party, as a shadow the substance. If we take but a cursory view of past times, we shall see that many who are now justly considered as models of virtue and of political wisdom, were in their day aspersed with all the venom which a virulent party could expectorate upon them. On bad hearts and mean minds, the lucrative advantages of high offices in the state will always have an influence irresistibly alluring. They will never rest at ease without a participation of them; but will engage some poor dependent printer to admit their poisonous writings into his paper, in hopes of supplanting others to make room for themselves. The poor printer considers his fortune made when patronized by lords and dukes, and stands ready to calumniate the best men, or to speak treason, for the con-

fidential smile of a wretched and disappointed, an envious and an ill-natured peer; perhaps of a villain, who would betray his country, because he cannot procure a lucrative place in its administration.

I will not now expatiate on the wickedness of evil-speaking, a topic which has been admirably treated by the divines of England. If any reader can want to be informed how inconsistent it is with the spirit of Christianity, and how pregnant with moral and social evil of every kind, I will refer him to all the most celebrated composers of sermons in the English language. But, alas! they who delight in scandal possess dispositions not to be delighted or reformed by a sermon.

In the mean time, I will content myself with entreating readers of the better sort, the humane, and the well-educated of the higher ranks (with whom I hope to prevail), to set a noble example, by refusing to give encouragement to those prints which are notorious for personal abuse and the publication of family secrets. It is but just to say, that there are some respectable conductors of the prints, who exclude, as far as human vigilance can exclude, all that is injurious.

For their own sakes, I advise the Public not to take in pamphlets and papers which deal in all the bitterness of scandal. Their own hearts and happiness will be injured by the perusal of them, and they cannot know how soon it may be their turn to suffer by the malignity which they are so ready to enjoy.

It is indeed a melancholy truth, that the love of calumny, and the curiosity to be acquainted with the private affairs of all distinguished characters, is become so general, that a work scarcely wants any other recommendation, if it professes *personality and anecdote*. The prevalence of this cruel taste pre-

cludes the relish of innocent and ingenious works on general topics. It will also infallibly habituate the mind to delight in cruelty and malice: for, as the feeling Goldsmith says, "like the tyger that seldom "desists from pursuing man after having once "preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has "once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes "ever after the most agreeable feast on murdered "reputation."

No. VII. *On Forming a Taste for Simple Pleasures.*

To argue against pleasure in general, is absurd. It is the law of nature, that every animal should prefer the agreeable sensations to the disagreeable. But it is incumbent on the moralist to explode those pleasures, which, though they are transient and unsatisfactory in themselves, are yet found to occasion pain which is permanent, and injury which is real.

Perhaps the most effectual mode of accomplishing this purpose is, not to arraign pleasure in general, but to substitute other pleasures in their place; for man must be amused and delighted. Pernicious amusements and poisoned delights will be pursued, if others cease to be obvious.

It is certain that nature has interspersed a great number of objects capable of affording the liveliest delight, without danger of future pain, and even with the probability of deriving improvement and additional pleasure by reflecting on the past enjoyment. Such, indeed, are those innocent pleasures

which we follow in early youth with cheerful ardour, and which we enjoy with sincere delight, before we are vitiated and hardened by a long intercourse with a depraved world; before the qualities of the lamb and the dove are exchanged for the less amiable wisdom of the wolf and the serpent.

Amidst all the improvements which we make in a state of high civilization, we lose some natural tastes and propensities which were favourable to virtue. We acquire wants and notions which disturb our repose, and cause a feverish anxiety, ever thirsting, and never satisfied.

The simple and innocent satisfactions of nature are usually within reach; and as they excite no violent perturbation in the pursuit, so are they enjoyed without tumult, and relinquished without long or painful regret. It will then render essential service both to happiness and morality, if we can persuade men in general to taste and to form an habitual attachment to the genuine satisfactions of uncorrupted nature.

One of the first affections which the heart perceives, is filial piety. As years increase, this affection dilates, and extends itself to brothers and sisters, relatives and domestics. The child loves and is beloved by all around him. Amidst the conversation, the events, the endearments and tender duties of a family, he finds full play for all his faculties and propensities, and is often, by his own subsequent confession, happier at this early age than in any period which succeeds.

I say then, that, were a taste for this simple pleasure retained, were men at a mature age led to seek their happiness in domestic life, and in the exercise of the mild virtues of family offices, their enjoyments, though less brilliant and noisy, would be purer, and more substantial. But, on the contrary, we see

them no sooner arrived at maturity, than they eagerly leave the nest, and wander, in search of an untried and an imaginary bliss, through all the wilds of dissipation. In the precipitate pursuit, innocence is often lost; and whatever progress is made in refinement, little is added to solid happiness. Our interest, as we falsely call it, and our honour, become the idols whom we devoutly worship, and on whose altars we sacrifice health, truth, peace, and liberty.

We are indeed so deeply engaged in our objects, that we cannot advert to the beauties of nature, those fertile sources of unadulterated pleasure. The young mind is always delighted with rural scenery. The earliest poetry was pastoral, and every juvenile poet of the present day delights to indulge in the luxuriance of a rural description. A taste for these pleasures will render the morning walk at least as deligtful as the evening ridotto. The various forms which nature assumes in the vicissitudes of the seasons, will constitute a source of complacency which can never be exhausted. How grateful to the senses the freshness of the herbage, the fragrancy of the flowers, all those simple delights of the field, which the poets have, from the earliest ages, no less justly than exuberantly described! "It is all mere fiction," exclaims the man of the world, "the produce of a visionary poet." He feels not, he cannot feel their truth. He sees no charms in herbs and blossoms; the melody of the grove is no music to his ear; and this happens, because he has lost, by his own fault, those tender sensibilities which nature had bestowed. They are still daily perceived in all the perfection by the ingenuous and innocent, and they have been most truly described by feeling poets, as contributing to pure, real, and very exalted delight.

Yet the possessor of extensive lands, if he is a man of fashion and spirit, forsakes the sweet scenes of rural nature, and shuts himself up in a coffee-house, at a gaming-table, in a fetid assembly; and leaves that liberal air, which breathes over his lawns, and agitates his forests, to be inhaled by his menial rustics. He perverts the designs of nature, and despises the hereditary blessings of Providence; and he receives the adequate punishment in a restless life, perpetually seeking and never finding satisfaction. But the employments of agriculture, independently of their profit, are most congenial and pleasing to human nature. An uncorrupted mind sees, in the progress of vegetation, and in the manners and excellencies of those animals which are destined to our immediate service, such charms and beauties as art can seldom produce. Husbandry may be superintended by an elegant mind, nor is it by any means necessary that they who engage in it should contract a coarseness of manners or a vulgarity of sentiment. It is most favourable to health, to plenty, to repose, and to innocence; and great indeed must be the objects which justify a reasonable creature in relinquishing these. Are plays, are balls, are nocturnal assemblies of whatever denomination, are debaucheries in all their modifications, which tend to rob us of sleep, to lessen our patrimony, to injure our health, to render us selfish, vicious, thoughtless, and useless, equivalent to these? Reason replies in the negative; yet the almost universal departure from innocence and simplicity, will lead the affirmative established by a corrupt majority.

It is not without a sigh, that a thinking man can pass by a lordly mansion, the sweet retreat deserted by its falsely-refined possessor, who is stupidly carousing in some tavern of a polluted city. When he

sees the chimney without smoke in the venerable house, where all the country was once welcomed to partake of princely hospitality, he cannot help lamenting that progress of refinement, which, in rendering the descendants of the great fine gentlemen, has left them something less than men, through the defect of manly virtues.

The superintendence of a garden might of itself occupy a life elegantly and pleasurably. Nothing is better able to gratify the inherent passion of novelty; for Nature is always renewing her variegated appearance. She is infinite in her productions, and the life of man may come to its close before he has seen half the pictures which she is able to display. The taste for gardening in England is at present pure. Nature is restored to her throne, and reigns majestically beautiful in rude magnificence. The country abounds with cultivated tracts truly paradisaical. But as the contemplative observer roams over the lawn, and enjoys the shade of the weeping willow, he is often led to inquire, "Where is now the owner "of this wilderness of sweets? Happy man!" he exclaims, "to possess such a spot as this, and to be "able at all times to taste the pleasure which I feel "springing in my bosom." But, alas! the owner is engaged in other scenes. He is rattling over the streets of London, and pursuing all the sophisticated joys, which succeed to supply the place where Nature is relinquished. If he condescends to pay an annual visit to the retreat, he brings with him all his acquired inclinations; and while he sits at the card-table, or at the banquet, and thinks of little else than promoting his interest at the next election, he leaves the shrub to blossom and diffuse its sweets in unobserved solitude.

Can it be believed, that nature bestowed beauty on the foliage of a flower but with a view to please?

The fruit might be produced, in the same process, without any richness and diversity of colour. No other animals are sensible of their grace but the human: and yet the austere man of business, or the vain man of pleasure, will arraign another with a face of importance for his admiration of a flower. He calls the taste trifling and useless. But is not a refusal to be pleased with such appearances, like the malignant unthankfulness of a sullen guest, who refuses to taste the most delicious dainties prepared for his entertainment?

Fine weather in England is the source of a very sensible pleasure; but he who is engrossed by vice or by business, will live half a life without admiring the beauties of a blue sky, basking in the vernal sunshine, or inhaling, with any consciousness of delight, the balsam of a western gale.

A fondness for the pleasing animals which Nature has placed around us, is another source of natural, and pure, and innocent amusement. The plumage and the song of the bird were doubtless intended to delight the ear and the eye. Who can behold the playful lamb without complacency? The fidelity of the dog, the generosity of the horse, and the characteristic qualities, as well as shape and beauty, of all animated nature, are admirably adapted to charm the heart which is yet unspoiled.

But, in a proper intercourse and behaviour among our fellow-creatures, is found to consist our principal and most constant delight. To do good, and to prevent evil, as far as the sphere of our influence or activity extends, is an infallible method of deriving to ourselves pleasurable emotions. And if we consult what passes in our bosoms, before our youthful sensibilities are blunted, we shall find, that Nature has taught us to find a great pleasure in relieving distress, and in communicating enjoyment

The cunning and the crafty, of whom consists a great part of the busy crowd, who derive an unnatural influence from the possession of riches, will deem the simplicity which I have recommended, folly. Such men will deem truth also folly. They consider virtue and truth as words invented to delude the simple ones; but, in truth, to retain through life something of the simplicity of the infant, will render the improved and cultivated *man* truly wise. For, after all the refinements of false philosophy, and the low arts of jesuitical cunning, honesty is our truest interest, and innocence our best wisdom.

No. VIII. *On Supporting the Dignity of the Commercial Character.*

In a country whose insular situation has rendered it naturally commercial, it is good policy to place the mercantile profession in an honourable light. It has not usually held a very high place in the esteem of the world: because, in most countries, it has been disgraced by covetousness and circumvention. Its primary object, the accumulation of money, has never appeared with any peculiar lustre in the eyes of those who have seen the beauty of disinterested patriotism and heroic generosity. But at the same time it is certain, that a mercantile life affords scope for the display of many good qualities and of virtues, which, from their sublime and difficult nature, may constitute the merchant a practical philosopher. It affords an ample field for the ex-

ercise of commutative justice, of self-denial in refusing to take advantages which might be taken with secrecy; of public virtue, in renouncing all traffic which may be injurious, and in forming every connexion, and importing every commodity, which may facilitate the operations of a government. Large and extensive commerce, instead of narrowing, has enlarged the sentiments; and British merchants have, in the two last centuries, joined to the most exemplary integrity the most liberal beneficence.

But it must be owned, that they then appeared most respectable when they least departed from their character. In the present age they have relinquished the simplicity of their ancestors, and endeavouring to import the airs and manners of a court into a counting-house, have lost their dignity and diminished their profits.

It has been said, that, in order to preserve a political constitution in its original purity, it is necessary, at certain intervals, to reduce it to its primary principles. Deviation from right and encroachment on error, are the natural consequences of human infirmity, in the progressive revolutions of affairs. It is therefore as necessary in morals, as well as in politics, to return to principles and manners, which have been insensibly forsaken in the pursuit of innovation. The manners of our predecessors, which we now despise as simple and unrefined, will be found, in many instances, more conducive to national and personal happiness, than the nominal improvements which have superseded their prevalence.

I will not dwell on general observations, but will deduce my remarks from real life. I assert then, that the merchants of the present times are often ashamed of the appellation of citizens. My proof

is, the fact, that they desert the city. No sooner have they accumulated a competent sum, than the noble mansion in a venerable street is forsaken for a smart house in a new-built square. The principal's presence is thus removed from the scene of action, and opportunities are afforded for every species of idleness and fraud in the inferior substitutes. Habits are contracted, and intimacies formed in the new region, most opposite to the spirit of commerce. Late hours and irregular banquets are not at all conducive to that punctuality which constitutes one of the most valuable and graceful qualities of a merchant. Great and enormous wealth can indeed support almost any species of folly; but the misfortune is, that they who have their fortunes to make will emulate those who have already made them. To live at next door to a peer, or in a street with dukes, is a temptation scarcely resistible. Add to these solid satisfactions of the merchant himself, that the ladies of the family feel new degrees of gentility, like inspiration, gradually come upon them, as they approach more nearly to the purlieus of St. James's.

It was not thus that a Gresham raised a fortune and a reputation equal to the most renowned personages of his time. It was by industry, temperance, regularity, close application, and by leaving those to follow fashion, whose shallow intellects could find no other object to pursue. It would have been an ill exchange to have given up the title of the father of the greatest city in Europe, and the glory of founding a college and a forum, for the petty vanity of residing in the circle of fashion; to have descended from the first in the neighbourhood of the Exchange to be the last in Bloomsbury-square.

I would advise the merchant, who would live with real dignity, to make the city respectable, if he does

not find it so, by displaying his worth in it. Worthy conduct, with a noble fortune, will aggrandize any place. Adorn that place in which it is your lot to be fixed. Where, indeed, ought men to expend their opulence móre readily than where it was amassed, where their characters are well known, and their virtues valued?

Many evils result from this general emigration. The influence of good example is lost among the numerous tribe of apprentices, clerks, and journeymen, who are the rising generation of merchants; but whose morals are early tainted with the foulest infection, by running after those pleasures which their superintendant appears to pursue. They are led to despise that city and those manners which their master avoids.

The city of London, as a corporate body, at this moment suffers by the contempt of the members who owe it most respect. When the rich and respectable leave it, who are to fill its magistracies and its council? The lower orders of tradesmen, destitute of education and of liberal views, and thrust forward into office by nothing but their own pragmatical activity. No wonder a corporation has lost its influence and sullied its honours, when those who stand forth as its leaders are the meanest of its members. The opulent and most consequential have packed up their effects, as soon as they have acquired all they wanted, and have left the pillaged city to stand or fall, as it may happen. They are no longer citizens; but esquires at their villas, and courtiers within the vicinity of the palace. Like the reptile, they have dropt their slough, and shine with a new outside.

A time has been, when merchants only retired to their villas when they had accumulated their fortunes. They now begin with a villa, as if it were

as necessary as a warehouse; and end with bankruptcy as naturally, as unreluctantly, and as unblushingly, as if it had been the object of their pursuit. Distress and difficulty excite meanness and artifice; fraud and injustice soon follow, and the dignity of the British merchant is sunk in the scandalous appellation of a swindler.

The fall of the eminent trader involves many in the misfortune. His wife and children are reduced from a life of splendor and luxury to indigence and obscurity; to a state which they bear less patiently, because they have been accustomed to indulge their vanity and pride without control. Vice, and every species of misery, are increased by this imprudent conduct in his own family, and poverty brought into the houses of his inferior assistants, or dependants, who have either entrusted him with their money or their labour unrepaid.

This is a picture drawn from life: what it represents daily occurs; and the whole of it is occasioned by the merchant's departure from his natural and his most becoming character.

In order to resume that character, let him consider what virtues his way of life particularly requires. He will find them to be industry, honesty, and frugality. Let him seriously pursue them, nor be ashamed of them when he has succeeded in his pursuit. Let him not dread the appellation of a dull cit, nor any of those jokes, with which the envy and malice of witlings console themselves on another's superiority. Let him assure himself, that the character of a man of integrity and benevolence is far more desirable than that of a man of pleasure, or a man of fashion. The one is like solid gold, the other like tinsel; the one is like a venerable oak, the other like the gaudy and transitory tulip; the one is always blest and a blessing, the other frequently

a curse. Dare to be what you are, is a rule which, if observed, would secure to men that happiness, of which the greater part never see any thing but the phantom, the cloud in the place of the goddess.

The great source of mercantile miscarriage is, that the merchant usually begins in a mode of life which should naturally adorn a successful conclusion. He begins with a rural retreat, and with expensive relaxations; with those pleasures, which should, in the regular course, be reserved as the reward of his toils, and the comfort of his age. He spends his active days in superfluous and unsatisfactory indulgence, and dooms the winter of life to want, to neglect, to a prison, or an alms-house. I believe it is true, that at least as many bankrupts are made by misconduct in some mode or other, as by misfortune.

In a country abounding with merchants, some of these hints will be thought useful, and will be adopted by a few in the rising generation; and the example of a few may in time be generally followed.

No. IX. *An Idea of a Patriot.*

Heróic virtue, in its most exalted and comprehensive degree, though often talked of, is not often found. It must indeed, like all other prodigies appear but seldom. To produce it, it is necessary that, besides a union of the finest qualities of the heart and understanding, many favourable contingencies, which no abilities can command, should at

once concur in the same individual. A Cæsar and an Alexander, if they had been born in a cottage, and had lived in a village, would have died in obscurity. And, indeed, after all the eulogia passed upon them, it may be fairly asked, Whether, if such had been their lot, mankind would have had cause to lament?

None but a barbarous age can admire the bloody triumphs of the mere conqueror; but every age must agree in extolling the true patriot. True patriotism, which is a species of heroic virtue, and indeed the best species of it, does not often occur. The name is daily assumed, and in our country has lost its dignity by prostitution. It has been wantonly lavished on those who, from the worst motives, have fomented faction, and kindled the flames of rebellion. It has been denied to the preservers of their country, and given to the destroyers of it; to those who have spent their lives, and exercised the abilities they possessed, in producing all those evils which the institution of civil society was intended to extirpate. They evidently have had little else in view, but to render themselves of consequence enough to be bought by an administration. Selfishness and spite, pride and a levelling principle, are qualities very unfavourable to the existence of civil liberty. Yet these qualities have appeared very clearly in those who have laboured to be forced into power by the efforts of a fascinated populace.

For the sake then of those orders among us whose hearts are good and truly English, but who, from the want of education or leisure, are not apt to think coolly when they select a favourite leader, and who are often cruelly and infamously deluded to their own destruction, and to the detriment of that liberty which they love, I will endeavour to

describe those characters which appear to me truly patriotic.

In the first place, I would lay it down as an axiom, That a bad man cannot be a patriot. Even the badness of his heart may lead him to assume all the deceitful appearances of patriotism. His envy, and his disappointed avarice and ambition, will induce him to revile those who are in possession of lucrative and powerful employments, and this will appear like a noble opposition to the strides of power. To serve his purposes, he will declaim on liberty, and this will soon collect a party. Fools and wicked men abound. These soon herd together, and even render themselves of some consequence by their numbers. Honest men are drawn in by the violence of the vortex, and the wicked leader at last gains his selfish views, or at least obtains the satisfaction of mortifying those whom he envies. At all events, he is sure of one pleasure, which is congenial to his heart, that of spreading mischief and confusion. I repeat, therefore, that it will be necessary to convince ourselves, that a bad husband, a bad father, a profligate and an unprincipled man, cannot deserve the name of a patriot, unless it is given him, as it may indeed in the present age, by way of derision. A man of no private virtue must want principle; and a man who wants principle cannot be actuated by pure motives. He cannot entertain so liberal and exalted an affection as a rational and disinterested love of his country. He may accidentally be right in his opposition to a court; but he is a bad man, and it is not safe to trust to him. He may be the wicked instrument of gratifying my spleen or his own; but yet I will think before I lift up my hand to vote for him, lest his turbulence, united with the power which I may assist in delegating to him, may involve my country in war,

riot, and rebellion. I will remember what is past, and be cautious.

Much has been said by the declamatory on the subject of a Patriot King. I believe it happy for a nation when the King has not the qualities of a declaimer's patriot, of an active warrior, or a contentious orator. When a King possesses or arrogates the character of a hero, his reign usually terminates in despotism or in blood, or in both. Moderation, justice, lenity, and a pacific disposition, are the most valuable, if not the most glittering jewels, in a crown. I almost fear to apply the remark to the King of England, lest I should be suspected of that adulation which my heart abhors. But truth must prevail over every consideration. And when I see the chief magistrate, a good son, a good husband, a good father, I think it a favourable presage of all that is amiable and useful to society. When I see him also possessing fortitude enough to turn a deaf ear to the continued and importunate petitions and remonstrances of a deluded faction; when I see him rendering the judges independent; when I see him anxious to preserve the liberties of the meanest of his subjects, delighted with benevolent actions, seeking and ensuing peace from motives of philanthropy, yet prosecuting war with all the spirit of a righteous cause; encouraging arts, and promoting discoverics; when I see all his amiable dispositions, and his many laudable acts, I venture to pronounce George the Third a Patriot King. The characters of kings are indeed but uncertainly known while they live; and I am ready to confess, that I derive my ideas of the King of Britain from no other sources but public acts and popular reports.

If a peer of the realm is found to be in constant opposition to the measures of a ministry, it is easy to know the causes and the extent of his patriotism;

for a minister cannot always be wrong. He is conceited, turbulent, yet unemployed by his King. He lusts after power, and hopes to acquire it by force, since it cannot be obtained by gentler means. He will even patronize rebellion, and diffuse discontent throughout a kingdom, to injure a few individuals, whose riches he covets, and whose glory he envies. Though he should sign a hundred protests in a session, and daily eructate his invectives against the most respectable men in the nation, we will not be misled; for his patriotism is passion, his perseverance avarice; and the same tongue which is ready to revile his King and embroil his country, is usually as prone to blaspheme his God. When they whom the constitution has appointed hereditary guardians of the laws, and liberties, and religion of their country, become the patrons of lawless licentiousness, and the scoffers at every thing held sacred, why hesitate their countrymen to strip the coronet from their heads, and trample their honour in the dust? Tear off their ermine, and their star which belies their breast; for the meanest of their menials, who performs his humble duties in his humble station, is far nobler than they.

With respect to the noisy declaimers, and the quiescent instruments of power in the lower order of senators, let expressive silence speak their praise. Their patriotism is well understood. The one side resembles Cerberus barking for a sop, the other resembles him when, after he has received it, he wraps himself up in his own warm skin, and enjoys a comfortable doze. The public has been too long deluded to be again deceived. They see the faults, and no longer admire, but look for a palliation of them in the common weakness of human nature. Of all oppositions, scarcely any have been more violent and active, and scarcely any less successful,

than that which has harassed Great Britain during the greater part of the present reign. And of all venality, none was ever more openly avowed than the present.

Let us turn our attention to the military order. And here let us be cautious how we again illuminate our houses, and render our throats hoarse with reiterated acclamations. However we may dote on their names, they are no patriots, who, from party principles, or from personal pique, voluntarily suffer our perfidious and inveterate enemy to insult the British flag unchastised. They are no patriots who wish to exalt the military above the civil power. They are no patriots who, in a time when every arm ought to wield the sword for the country whose money they have received, relinquish their employ because they hate a minister. They are no patriots, but they are poltroons. In which class they also are to be placed, who, when sent on the service of their country, lavish the money with which they are intrusted in unnecessary profusion, and return without an action; who bluster and boast, but who, to save their lives, will lose their honour, and endanger their country's existence.

And what are those writers to be called, who, perverting the perfection of reason and the fruits of learning, endeavour to unsettle all our principles under the pretence of asserting our liberty? Patriots shall we call them? Alas! when I see them obviously actuated by pride and vanity, and, for the sake of being distinguished, endeavouring to overturn good order and tranquillity, I call them the enemies of the human race; and if I did not pity their delusion, I might execrate their names.

I will venture to advance an opinion rather paradoxical, but certainly well founded. We are not always to look for the truest patriotism in public

life. Selfish motives commonly instigate the noisy votaries of ambition and popularity. But what can influence him who secretly serves his country in the retired and unobserved walks of private life? His motives must be pure, and he *is a patriot*. Men of fortune and dignity, who, dwelling peaceably in the habitation of their fathers, set a good example; who endeavour to preserve from the rude hand of innovation all the good institutions of our ancestors; who are given to hospitality, ready to assist with their presence and their purse in all public business and useful charities;—men of this kind *are truly patriots*. Every good man is indeed a patriot; for a good man is a public good. But poverty, and a humble and a private station, must circumscribe the beneficial influence of goodness; and it does not fall to the lot of many in a century to possess the power and good dispositions of a *North*.

What I now say may be attributed to interested adulation. I regard not the imputation, for it is not just. I never heard any ill of the man, or of the minister, but what proceeded from the venomous tongue of faction; and I know that he has steered the vessel of state amidst such storms as would have dashed it in pieces, if those patriots, who increased the tempest, that they might make themselves necessary in the distress, had been employed as pilots.

No. X. *The Respectableness of the Clergy.*

It seems probable at first sight, that an order of men who devote themselves entirely to the instruction of their fellow-creatures, would be exempted

from envy and from hatred. As their studies are all peaceable, and their labours directed to the diffusion of goodness, and consequently of tranquillity, both public and private, it is natural to suppose, that the better part of the world would view them with favour, and that even the profligate would behave to them with distant respect.

But it is certain, that scarcely any other body of men, so large and considerable, has been more unkindly represented than the clergy. Every patron of infidelity, after he has endeavoured to pierce the sides of the Redeemer, has pointed the envenomed weapon at his ministers. But the patrons of infidelity have always been found, on close examination, no less superficial and sophistical, than malignant and presumptuous. They have therefore fixed indiscriminately upon every clergyman the imputation of certain odious sentiments of a political nature; as if it were consistent with reason or common sense, that the moment a gentleman of liberal education receives a legal commission from the ecclesiastical superior, to pray aloud in an assembly, or to read a moral discourse in it, all his political sentiments are rendered erroneous, or dissimilar to the opinions of those among his countrymen who are equally enlightened.

That the clerical sentiments in politics, supposing that the clergy entertain any peculiar to their profession, are favourable to liberty, and to all the dearest rights of mankind in the aggregate, and of individuals in their relative connexions, might be clearly proved by historical evidence. My design, however, does not permit me to expatiate in the field of history, or it were easy to produce very signal instances of the noble stand they have made for liberty, religious as well as civil.

They have also sometimes been hostile to free-

dom. But so have many of the nobles of the time, and many of the inferior orders of the laity. They pursued that conduct, and adopted those sentiments which were agreeable to them as men, and not peculiar to them as clergymen. If they acted from honest principles, though their judgment should be impeached for error, no censure will fall on their clerical profession. When they became clergymen, they did not renounce their rights as men; nor their liberty of judging and acting, which they derived from the constitution of that community to whose support they contributed.

It is inequitable to judge of the present race of ecclesiastics from the specimens afforded in the darker ages. The clergy were then ignorant, vicious, and superstitious; but the laity were more so. The clergy were such as they must have been without sufficient employment, without examples, without learning, and without the means of acquiring it. Yet, even in this unpromising state, they were serviceable to letters. They transcribed and preserved books, though they often did not understand what they wrote, nor know the value of their treasures. They preserved those lamps of learning by which, though, from a defect in the management, they afforded them but a glimmering light, the world has been since illuminated.

But to enter on the merits or demerits of clerical individuals of past ages, is to engage in a subject too diffusive to be consistent with our present purpose. It may be more advantageous, as well as practicable, to consider this respectable body, as it appears at present. The clergy, like all other orders in society, undergo a change in the progressive vicissitude of times and manners; and what might truly characterize them in one age, will misrepresent them in another. In the papal church.

and under an absolute government, they are totally different from a Protestant and an English clergy; they are not so much the ministers of the humble Jesus, as the tools of a secular and ecclesiastical despot. In a country like ours, they imbibe the liberal spirit of our civil constitution; and, by the light of their learning and morals, greatly add to the general lustre of their country. Indeed, if they cease to be respected and valued, the fault is their own. Improper levities, compliances, or negligences, diminish that dignity which their office, their labours, their learning, and their manners, would otherwise maintain.

Of the dignitaries of the church it is no uncommon topic to complain. They are often represented as the drones of society; as idly slumbering in a stall, without making any return to the public for the ease and luxury which they abundantly enjoy. Selfishness, avarice, and voluptuousness, are satirically attributed to them as their distinguishing characteristics; and it is remarked, that they would be blanks in society, were not their existence demonstrated by an unceasing pursuit of private gratification.

But, in answer to these acrimonious reflections, we may say in general that all situations which possess many happy circumstances with little labour or anxiety, will naturally excite envy and malignity. The dignitaries of the church enjoy that ease and those innocent pleasures which men usually pursue when they possess a competency without the necessity of solicitude. That they do not step out of their sphere, or engage in the conflicts of party, redounds to their honour. Parochial employments are regularly filled by other persons. To invade the province of the officiating clergy would be to disturb that order which constitutes one of the beauties of religion itself, as well as of all ecclesiastical esta-

blishments. If they are decent and pacific, benevolent in their neighbourhood, hospitable to the inferior clergy, and virtuous in private life, they are, notwithstanding the appearance of indolence, both ornamental and useful to the church and to society. They are more respectable than if their restlessness led them to be at the head of an association, or to recommend polygamy. And with respect to the expediency of dignities in the church, I am not of the same opinion with those penurious philosophers whose ideas of utility are circumscribed within the limits of actual profit. As human nature is constituted, something is to be allowed to external appearance, and something to innocent enjoyment. I would neither strip a king nor a prelate of those outworks which either defend him from contempt, or facilitate the exercise of his jurisdiction, or contribute to his complacency.

If persons thus exalted to ease and honour, and thus exempted from exertion, lower themselves, by remarkable levity, by rendering themselves most conspicuous at all public places, and by patronizing vanity, they then become truly despicable, and richly deserve the public resentment. That the majority of dignitaries preserve their character, and are respectable, I firmly believe; and I say it without partiality or adulation, for I have not the happiness to know or to be known to a single individual in the church above the rank of a parish priest. I should indeed consider it as presumptuous in me to give my opinion, if I did not consider at the same time, that the natural liberty of a man is not lost by the want of ecclesiastical dignity.

The character and office of a parish priest, when uniformly and completely maintained, are most useful and most honourable. A worthy parish priest is the father of his parish, the guardian of

the poor, the instructor of the ignorant, the protector of the injured, the friend of all; even of those who are deaf to his instructions, and despise his profession. If any human office can be justly called godlike, it is the office of a parish priest.

But when I turn my attention to real facts, I frequently find the ministers of parishes neither the objects of love nor of esteem. This is sometimes occasioned by the prevalence of infidelity, and sometimes as it must happen while the clergy are men, by their own want of merit and bad behaviour. But the grand cause of their losing their influence is, that the laity, in this age of scepticism, grudge them their tythes. The decay of religion, and the contempt of the clergy, arise from this source.

I will not enter fully on the subject of tythes; but I will make a cursory remark. Let the laity ask themselves, by what tenure any one among them has a better right than any other to reap the produce of any particular field, and to exclude others of the laity from it? They must answer, by the laws of the country in which they reside. But the same laws have given the clergy a right to a decimal part. If there is an unreasonableness in the laws in one respect, there is also in the other. And a man who has no land at all, may as justly complain that his neighbour assumes an exclusive right to the acres, contiguous to his dwelling as the possessor of the acres, that the clergyman claims a tenth part of their produce. The rights of the clergy stand on a basis more solid than the national constitution. The objections raised to them originate in selfishness, greediness, and the unfeeling stupidity of irreligion, I rejoice that the clergy have often spirit enough to prosecute their legal claims against the harpies of avarice.

If the incumbent made no claim on the purse of

his parishioner, he might always be loved and esteemed, or at least suffered to live and die in peace. But his wife and his children are dear to him, and have as good a right, by all the laws of God and man, to be fed and clothed, as those of the esquire or farmer who litigates his claim. He is cruel, and worse than a Heathen, who endeavours not to provide for his own child, by receiving what is justly his due; since, if he does not receive it, that child, the very moment he expires, may be spurned as a beggar from the door of the churlish peasant who robbed the father of his right.

But where is the utility of the clergy? exclaims the boor, who pays his land-tax cheerfully, but refuses his tythes. Surely, one might answer, national good does not consist only in the number of ships which arrive in our ports, the extent of our dominions, and the abundance of our armaments. Good morals and internal tranquillity are in reality superior to all these, whatever ostentation they may display. These are indeed, according to their original design, only instrumental to the establishment of internal peace and social happiness, though they are daily abused to effect the purposes of avarice and ambition, and are always talked of as the first objects. If, then, good morals and internal tranquillity are the chief national good, as they certainly are in the eye of Heaven and of dispassionate reason, the clergy must be allowed to deserve their very moderate emoluments: for let us consider how many millions are lavished in the support of armaments, and how very small a pittance, in comparison, supports the parochial clergy, to whose important ends, internal peace and happiness, the armaments are only subordinately, mechanically, and remotely subservient. That minister or financier, whatever the world may think, possesses a narrow and unphilo-

sophical mind, who estimates the good of a people solely by the extent of their commerce and the largeness of the revenue. When these are in their most flourishing state, the people as individuals, and therefore the nation, may be in their decline. Luxury and vice of every kind may be diffusing misery among all the individuals in the nation; and can there be a national happiness independent of the happiness of the majority of individuals, or consistent with their misery? According to the wretched system of worldly-minded politicians, there can. Nay, even the misery of individuals is often promoted and encouraged, in order to increase this political happiness, which exists only an ideal phantom. Intoxication and gaming, for instance, as they increase the revenue, are at this moment tacitly encouraged throughout England. The consumption of spirituous liquors, though it slays millions at home, helps to support thousands in those wars abroad, which ambition and wickedness render politically necessary.

But the clergy recommend innocence, contentment, temperance, and all the moral virtues, with all the blessings and comforts which attend them; and with respect to their national utility, let a liberal and benevolent man consider, what an advantage it is to have moral instructions diffused over the kingdom, established in the remotest villages, not only among the polished, but among the rudest of our countrymen, who would probably relapse into barbarism and savage brutality, if their minds were not cultivated by weekly lectures, powerfully recommending, by the most awful sanctions, all that is humane and friendly to human nature and civil society. And yet the public who pay a soldier liberally and cheerfully, often in this age, bestow with reluctance what the law of God and of their country

has allotted to the clergyman, and what his order can claim by the most ancient prescription.

I will here pay that tribute of respect which justice owes to the Dissenting Ministers. The gravity of their manners, and their judicious conduct in a variety of instances, has deservedly procured them a very considerable share of public estimation. Many among them, besides a Watts, have illustriously adorned human nature.

With respect to the order of Curates, on whom the essential business of a national clergy chiefly devolves, all the respect which is due to the clergy in general, and to the active clergy in particular, is indisputably due to them. The mediocrity of their stipends may indeed degrade them in the eyes of the rich vulgar; in the eyes of those, who feeling the obvious good of money, and insensible to other excellence, idolise Mammon, and despise those who possess it not in superfluous abundance. But the candid and the considerate will consider their poverty as one of their chief honours. That they are capable of maintaining a decent appearance, and discharging the expenses which are necessary to their subsistence, with an income less than that of many mechanics, reflects more true honour on them, than would be derived from the possession of an ample fortune. Though pride may spurn them, God will be their protector; and when they perform their arduous duties with conscientious regularity, even bad men must yield them an involuntary deference.

When indeed they affectedly assume the character of libertines and rakes, and dress themselves so as to suggest an idea that they are ashamed of appearing as clergymen; when they take the lead in public diversions; when they are eminently careless and immoral; then it is neither to be wondered nor la-

mented, that they are punished with universal contempt. But the world is prone to be malignantly censorious, and to require a degree of perfection which no mortal can uniformly display, whatever may be his office, whatever his virtues, and whatever his intentions. Continued and uniform profligacy can scarcely be treated with too much rigour, when it appears in those who have separated themselves to inculcate good precepts, and to exhibit good examples; but when we find ourselves inclined to censure a clergyman for a small fault, and without palpable reasons, let us ask our own hearts, whether if we were in their place, we should be able to preserve an unerring rectitude?

I have thus used that liberty of speaking my sentiments which every man possesses, with a view to vindicate the general character of the clergy. They are indeed sufficiently able to defend themselves: but every individual ought to contribute something to the general defence, when the attack is general. And I have the rather undertaken this business, from a conviction, that when the clergy are despised, they will degenerate; and that with them will decline the morals, the learning, the religion, and the importance of my country.

No. XI. *On the Tendency of Moral Profligacy to destroy Civil Liberty.*

It appears from a review of the world, that wherever man is denied the enjoyment of civil liberty.

he not only loses much of his natural happiness, but much of his natural dignity. His spirit is broken, his sentiments are depraved, and he seems contented to lead a life merely animal. Athens still stands, but where are the Athenians?

It is not indeed true, that the arts of painting, sulpture, and architecture, cannot flourish in the land of despotism. The productions of these contribute to the pleasure of the luxurious, considered only as ornamental furniture; they will therefore be bought at a high price; and where the artist is rewarded amply, ingenuity and manual labour will eagerly co-operate in producing works of imitation. The hope of gain will excite competition, and competition will produce emulation, and emulation excellence. Historical facts might be adduced to prove the truth of this theory; for the best productions of art have appeared in the arbitrary governments of Europe, and some of the worst in the republican. Indeed it is by no means certain, that the imitative arts, by politic perversion, may not be rendered subservient to the purposes of introducing despotism. A nation of Dilettanti are not likely to make a very manly stand against the encroachments of that royal power under which they find their imbecility protected. We shall not easily find a Hampden in a connoisseur. When public places of pleasure multiply in the capital, and the encouragement which should be given to active virtue and to literature, is transferred to artists, the jealous guardian of the liberties of his country may justly increase his vigilance. The arts ought to be encouraged; but they ought also to be kept in their proper subordination: for what are they in themselves? After all that the conceited and the pretenders to taste have advanced, they are but means

of amusement. They are indeed the means of most elegant and delightful amusement; but that which is only the means of amusement, must possess a lower rank than pursuits which tend to give stability to empire, to enlighten the intellects, to reform the morals of the people, and to found political happiness on the broad and massy basis of moral virtue, manly fortitude, and religious confidence.

But it is not with the virtues as with the arts. If they thrive at all in an arbitrary government, they thrive like exotic plants, which can never possess their native vigour or maturity. But what is life in circumstances which preclude every generous exertion which can render life rationally valuable? When man is compelled to sleep away his existence, or spend it in a wearisome reiteration of the animal functions, life is not life; and it is, we may therefore conclude, a rational, as well as enthusiastic passion, which every independent Englishman feels for liberty.

But liberty is too often misunderstood, and the mistaken ideas of it sometimes endanger its continuance. Vice also, when it becomes enormous and universal, is inevitably fatal to liberty. I mean then to derive an additional argument in favour of virtue, from its connexion with liberty, and from its efficacy in giving stability and authority to the political constitution of a free country. And certainly, if the love of our country is so general as the pretensions to it, many who are addicted to libertine practices and principles will be led to encourage, by precept and example, that decency and regularity, that temperance and industry, that religion and fortitude, which constitute a better bulwark against attacks upon our liberty, than our boasted fleets and armies. I believe they will find, that the se-

veral national vices, which I shall presently enumerate, are peculiarly adverse to the prevalence and permanency of legal freedom.

Without examining the definitions of politicians or logicians, I call that a state of liberty in which every man's person, property, and free agency, is secured or circumscribed by laws, which have been agreed to by the majority of the people at large, either directly or indirectly; either in their own persons, or by a representation primarily and tacitly, if not expressly, allowed by the people, for the convenience of public debate; which public debate could never come to a conclusion, if the debating assembly were composed of every individual in an empire. Salutary restraint is, then, the very principle of liberty; and they who, from their restless dispositions, or from misapprehension, endeavour to throw off every species of coercion, are in reality enemies to that freedom which they pretend to promote.

But of these the number is small, in comparison with others; who, without thinking of consequences which appear to them remote, slide imperceptibly into a conduct, which, though it does not destroy the fair fabric of liberty at once, and by an assault, gradually saps its foundations.

Luxury will always be indulged to excess in a rich and powerful country, abounding both with internal and imported commodities of that species which can be only subservient to pleasure and ostentation. Every year brings an increase to luxury; for, as it is founded in a great measure on vanity, the rich will be perpetually seeking distinction. As soon as they have displayed one mode of luxury, it is imitated; and, in order to obtain distinction, another mode must be adopted; and this dereliction and adoption proceeds in perpetual succession. No

fortune can supply unbounded expense; and the consequence is, that the great and noble are soon impoverished: but vanity is, in general, a more powerful principle than patriotism; and therefore, for the sake of supporting a figure in life, they who ought to stand up as the guardians of constitutional liberty, become ready to make any sacrifice to a minister, in exchange for a lucrative employment. The middle and the lowest ranks follow the example of the nobles, by incurring expenses which neither their patrimonies nor their personal industry can support. They therefore become alike dependent and servile, and in the extremities of their distress are ready to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. But besides that luxury, by involving all orders, in distress, deprives them of their independence, it naturally tends to weaken the understandings and vitiate the morals of the people. But no weak or bad man can ever entertain a proper love of liberty, or have it in his power to assert it when infringed. They who are immersed in voluptuousness, whether of the table or of any grosser kind, will consider liberty and the love of our country as names only fitted to adorn a poem, a romance, or a school-boy's declamation. They who build houses, and heap up costly pictures and furniture, with the money of an honest artizan or mechanic, will be very glad to be emancipated from the hands of a bailiff by the sale of their senatorial suffrage. Luxury indeed disposes to general indolence; and he who is overcome by its deceitful allurements, will think it a fortunate change to be freed from the noise and turbulence of liberty by the dead repose of despotism.

Levity, which is indeed intimately allied to luxury, is fatal to liberty. They who resolve never to think seriously, will suffer themselves to be robbed

of all that is valuable, without reluctance. Nothing can be more remote from levity, than the characters of those among the ancients who distinguished themselves as the champions of the natural rights of mankind. The very idea of Brutus, in the dress and with the grimace and the levity of a modern Frenchman, and of a modern Englishman who apes the Frenchman, is laughable. Whatever is great and valuable in society requires spirit and vigilance to perfect and preserve it; for nothing great and valuable is perfected and preserved by chance. But how shall he contribute an adequate share to the common mass of public good in the senate, in the field, on the bench, in the pulpit, or in the family, whose mind is engrossed by troubles and vanities, and who shrinks from all that is serious, as the bane of his fancied happiness? They who have raised an empire have always been grave and severe; they who have ruined it have been uniformally distinguished for their dissipation. It is the predominance of mental strength which contributes chiefly to superior strength of empire. If it be true, then, that we are adopting the levities of a foreign nation which has never known the sweets of liberty; if it be true, that the greater part of the people are for ever in pursuit of scenes of dissipation; if it be true, that our manners are universally trifling, and our conversation futile; it is time that those who value liberty should take the alarm, and endeavour to set better examples; lest it should appear, that amidst all our pleasures we are preparing slavery for our children; an idea which ought to embitter the sweetest of them in the midst of enjoyment.

The want of a liberal and manly education will render us unable to perceive the value of liberty. It will also prevent the acquisition of that dignity and authority of mind which alone can make a suc-

cessful stand against the encroachments of power. Ignorance is mean, and cannot make those generous sacrifices which our duty to our country demands, when its liberties are endangered. A mind destitute of a proper education will be easily deluded by the sophistical arguments of those, who, to serve selfish purposes, are ready to explain away every dear-bought privilege, with a view to make converts to doctrines detrimental to the rights of mankind. And with respect to those who are educated indeed, but educated in the manners and sentiments of a hostile country, though they may be descended from Tudors and Plantagenets, their hearts are not English. They consider all our virtues, and all our religious scruples, as insular prejudices; and if Englishmen were to permit them to import their improvements, they would establish a *Grand Monarque*, and show that they think the world was made for dukes, marquises, lords, and counts, to take their pastime in; and that such canaille as the body of English freeholders are only fit to be cuisiniers or perruquiers, to decorate their apish persons, and tickle their vitiated palates.

It needs no argument to prove, that an inordinate attachment to self-interest, that the excessive love of money or venality, tends directly to subvert our liberties; for he who is inclined to do any thing to promote his sordid interest, will sell his share of his country's rights as soon as he finds a willing purchaser. When the African prince pronounced, that all was venal at Rome, Roman virtue was departed. Liberty would not linger when deserted by Virtue, but left the throne to despotism, who assumed the imperial purple, and for ages cursed mankind.

An excessive zeal for liberty, like all excessive zeal, injuries the cause it means to serve. Faction and sedition disgrace free countries, and introduce

such evils as make the lovers of repose almost wish for the tranquillity of despotism. Ebullitions will sometimes rise in a free community, like humours in a healthy body; and when they preserve the limits of moderation, they are to be considered as symptoms of a sound constitution. But when they rise too high, and continue too long, they are like a gangrene, which gradually diffuses itself till it destroys the vitality of the subject from which it originates.

It will indeed be found, that all conduct which is extensively injurious to individuals, is injurious to the body politic. And I hope it will be adopted as an incontestible truth, that political good, like moral good, when it is solid and substantial, is always the result of an adherence to reason and virtue, prudence, and religion.

No. XII. *On that kind of Wisdom which consists in Accommodation and Compliance, without any Principles but those of Selfishness.*

THERE is a mean and sneaking kind of wisdom (I can allow it no better epithet) which marks the present times, and consists in a compliance with the inclinations, and an assent to the opinions, of those with whom we converse, however opposite they may be to our own, or to those we complied with or assented to in the last company we were in. And this cunning and cautious proceeding is honoured with the name of true politeness, good sense, and

knowledge of the world; or, to speak in the technical language of fashion, taking the ton of your company. When it is closely examined, it appears to originate in timidity, and in a mean and excessive regard to self-interest, and to be utterly inconsistent with the principles of honesty. "A person of "discretion," says the sensible and satirical Collier, "will take care not to embarrass his life, nor ex- "pose himself to calumny, nor let his conscience "grow too strong for his interest; he never crosses "a prevailing mistake, nor opposes any mischief "that has numbers and prescription on its side. "His point is to steal upon the blind side, and ap- "ply to the affections; to flatter the vanity and "play upon the weakness of those in power or in- "terest, and to make his fortune out of the folly of "his neighbours."

I say then, that a man who adopts this conduct, however plausible his appearance, however oily his tongue, and benevolent his professions, is not an honest man. He would not for the world contradict you, or express his disapprobation of your taste or your choice in any respect. But why would he not? Is it because he really thinks and feels as you do? Impossible. For he will assent to opinions diametrically opposite, as soon as he goes from your door to your next neighbour. Is it because he is so abundantly good-natured as to fear lest he should give you pain by contradiction? Believe it not. It is true indeed, that he fears to contradict you; but it is only lest he should lose your favour; and it is a maxim with him to court every individual, for he may one day want his assistance in accomplishing the objects of his covetousness or his ambition. While, therefore, he is entering into your views, approving your taste, confirming your observations; what think you passes in his

mind? Himself is the subject of his thoughts; and while you imagine that he is concurring with your opinion, and admiring your judgment, he is only meditating how he may most easily insinuate himself into your favour. Such cautious, timid, subtle men are very common in the world, and so are highwaymen and pickpockets.

It must be owned with regret, that this deceitful intercourse is the general mode of converse among those elevated beings who have separated themselves from the rest of mankind, under the name of People of Fashion. In this exalted region, you must learn to take the tone of every body with whom you converse, except indeed the vulgar. With the grave you must be grave, and with the gay you must be gay; with the vicious you must be vicious, and with the good and learned as good and learned as the best of them, if you can; but if you are not quite adept enough in dissimulation to have attained this excellence, it is safest to keep out of their way; for they are apt to speak disagreeable truths, and to be quite insufferable *bêtes*. This versatility and duplicity of the *grande monde* may indeed constitute a man of the world; but let it be remembered, that a book of some authority classes the world, when spoken of in this sense, with the devil.

The over-cautious wise men of these times are very fond of getting into the company of an honest man; and, by throwing out leading ideas, or by asking questions, they contrive to learn all his sentiments without uttering an opinion of their own. I have known some of these close gentlemen of the *volto sciolto* and the *pensieri stretti*, so reserved and mysterious, and at the same time so inquisitive, that you would have imagined them commissioned spies of an American congress, or members of the privy-council at home, if you had not perceived, that

their heads were as empty as their hearts were cowardly. If after you have opened yourself, you ask their opinion, they answer, that really they do not know what to say, they have not quite made up their minds; some people they find think one way, and some another. With respect to themselves, though they were very doubtful indeed, yet your arguments seem almost to have made them converts to your opinions; and, whatever the event may be, you have fully proved that reason is of your side; or, if it is not, you have shown amazing ingenuity and abilities in saying so much on a side which cannot be defended. Then, after having gained their point of sounding your sentiments, the conversation turns to the topics of the weather or the wind.

They display a most outrageous affectation of candour. They are always ready to make allowances for the infirmities of human nature, except when a rival or an object of their hatred is to be injured, and then, though it is not their disposition to be censorious, though it is well known they always palliate what they can, yet in this particular case, they will whisper, what they would not speak loud, nor have go any farther; they will whisper, that they believe the report, however horrid, to be strictly true, and indeed rather a favourable account; for if you knew as much as they do, they insinuate that you would be shocked indeed: but, however, they declare they will not in candour disclose what they know. So that we may conclude, as indeed is often the case, that badness of heart is allied with their pusillanimity. They are affectedly kind when their selfish views are to be promoted by kindness, and really malevolent when the same purposes are more effectually served by malevolence.

Where this compliance and assent, this caution, and this candour, arise from a natural tenderness of

disposition and softness of nature, as they sometimes do, they are almost amiable and certainly excusable; but as the effects of artifice, they must be despised. The persons who possess them are, indeed, themselves dupes of their own deceit, when they think others are deluded by it. For excessive art always betrays itself; and many, who do not openly take notice of the deceiver, from motives of delicacy and tenderness for his character, secretly deride and warmly resent his ineffectual subtilty. Cunning people are apt, as it has been well observed, to entertain too mean an opinion of the intellects of those with whom they converse, and to suppose that they can be moved like puppets by the secret wires which they play behind the curtain. But the puppets are often refractory, and the spectators always displeased.

Lucrative views are the usual motives which allure the sycophant to his mean submissions. But where lucrative views are greatly predominant, a truly respectable man is seldom found. Covetousness is so greedy a passion, that it not only attracts to itself its proper objects, but swallows up almost every other affection. Man indeed naturally and properly is attached to himself; but a liberal education, united to a good nature, corrects the excess of selfishness, and enables us to find enjoyment in many pursuits, which are conducive to the good of society. But when all is made to concentre in self, and when the mind is so contracted as to see no good but lucre, it brings its proper punishment upon itself, by a voluntary condemnation to a slavish, a timid, and an anxious existence. So that the contemptible characters which I have been describing are, in truth, enemies to self, even when they are exclusively devoted to it.

There are others who adopt the pusillanimity of

mean compliance and servile assent, by a wish to pass quietly and smoothly through life without the asperities or noise of opposition. This wish may certainly be carried to excess. Every man is bound by his religion, and by his regard to himself, his family, and his country, to seek peace. But it will not be secured by unmanly submissions. A proper degree of spirit and fortitude is as necessary to preserve tranquillity as a pacific disposition. Internal peace is infinitely more valuable than external; but he who is always afraid to own his sentiments, and is led into the mazes of deceit and duplicity, will find, amid his fears and his contrivances, his bosom agitated with emotions by no means tranquil and serene. Add to this, that the spiritless servility of a mean but fashionable time-server, will often invite insult, as it will deserve contempt.

In truth, every sensible man forms opinions on every thing which presents itself, and every honest man dares to avow them, when there is no evident reason for their concealment. If a man has virtuous, religious, and patriotic principles, he injures all those causes which he must wish to serve, by fearing to declare openly, on proper occasions, his inward conviction. It is indeed his duty to do so; for it is a part of virtue to add confidence to the virtuous, by professing a wish to be of the number.

But that wisdom, which consists in political compliance, without regard to the antiquated notions of moral fitness or unfitness, is no less visible in public than in private life. It is not the honest upright man, whose heart is as open as his countenance, who is judged worthy of great offices and employments. It is the varnished character, which, while it holds out the best professions, is capable of co-operating in all the mean artifices, which are often, according to the narrow system of worldly politics, politically

necessary. In the employments of state, he, who cannot meanly submit to time-serving, will not often be able to serve himself, or be permitted to serve his country.

In public measures, particularly those which concern religion for instance, it is insinuated, that not what is strictly and morally right, or strictly and morally wrong, is to be considered so much, as what is seasonable, what the times and the present system of manners will bear. At one time, popery is to be encouraged; because we are threatened with an invasion, and the papists are a numerous and rich body, capable of greatly assisting us as friends, or annoying us as enemies. At another time, popery is to be discountenanced by writings, by laws, by axes, and by faggots. At one time, Christianity is to be propagated by missionaries wherever we make a discovery; at another, we are to visit and revisit the isles of the Southern ocean, and not a wish be expressed by the rulers civil or ecclesiastic, for the conversion of the poor Otaheiteans and Ulieteans. At one time, ecclesiastics shall rule the nation; and at another time, not be permitted to share the least authority. The times will not bear ecclesiastical interference, and therefore the spiritual lords shall sit and hear the insults of a graceless peer, or see laws enacted which affect the protestant religion, or the general state of national manners and ecclesiastical establishments, in silent acquiescence, as if they were the novices of a Pythagoras, instead of men commissioned by the awful sanction of Jesus Christ and the laws of their country. They content themselves with the practice of moderation; but there are circumstances, in which the most christian forbearance becomes treachery and cowardice. But the times will not bear ecclesiastical authority. Now who is it, who makes the times what they are?

Even those, whose excessive caution and cowardly policy leave a doubt on the minds of the many, whether that zeal is not totally deficient which is the genuine result of sincerity. If policy only regulates the conduct of the clergy, the poor sceptical laity will be inclined to suspect, that the noble system of the established religion is founded on that policy, which they see is the chief means used to support it. I have no doubt, but that both the civil and ecclesiastical departments of the state would flourish more successfully, if that conduct was followed in their support, which shines openly in the eyes of mankind as the result of truth and honesty, than when those petty tricks and that temporizing management are pursued, which lead the governed to despise the persons, and disobey the authority of the governor. Let legal authority openly dictate what is right, when measured by the great eternal standard of truth and justice, and then let legal power enforce the practice. The times would then be conformed to the rulers, and not the rulers, by a strange perversion, to the times.

But here I pause, and ought perhaps to have stopt before, if it be true, as Bishop Hurd informs us in his Sermons, "that to dictate in such matters to "persons wiser than ourselves, or to persons who, "*by their stations and characters, should, in all* "*reason, be supposed wiser,* is a *manifest indiscretion,* "and can never be attended with any good conse- "quences. Were *we ever so able to instruct,* or were "they *ever so much in want of instruction, prudence* "would suggest a very different conduct. It would "recommend to us all the honest arts of *insinuation* "*and address;* it would oblige us to watch the *fittest* "*seasons and opportunities,* or perhaps to content "ourselves with the *silent* admonition of a good "example. Or, were *there nothing in the rank and*

"*condition of those* we would work upon, to *restrain* "*us to this caution*, we might even be required to "show a condescension *to their prejudices and hu-* "*mours.*" I then must be silent; but let old Collier be permitted to speak, "To come," says he, "from the state to the church. He that would be "an agreeable ecclesiastic, must survey the posture "of things, and examine the balance of interests, "and be well read in the inclinations and aversions "of the generality; and then his business will be, "to follow the loudest cry, and to make his tack "with the wind. Let him never pretend to cure "an epidemical distemper, nor fall out with a "fashionable vice, nor question the infallible judg- "ment of the multitude."

No. XIII. *A Prudent and Elegant Character exemplified in the Character of Atticus.*

Few among the ancient Romans have approached so nearly to a perfect character as Atticus. To the noblest instances of exalted wisdom and liberality, he added a peculiar elegance of life, seldom obtained even by those who probably possess a taste for its beauty.

But his reputation has of late been sullied by detraction. The Abbé St. Real, in the wantonness of idle ingenuity, has attempted to derogate from his character, by disputing the veracity of his biographer, Cornelius Nepos. Unluckily for St. Real, the principal passage he has quoted from Cicero to

convict the historian of falsehood is manifestly corrupt, and, when restored to its obvious sense, proves nothing to the purpose, as is shown by the elegant Melmoth in his agreeable remarks on Cicero's Essay on Old Age. The Abbé, however, takes upon him to represent this amiable man as a time server, and an artful politician, whose wisdom consisted in little else than a sagacious attention to his own safety.

The penetrating Middleton has also spoken less favourably of the friend of Cicero, than might have been expected. He insinuates, that his Epicurean principles taught him a selfish caution, totally incompatible with the cordiality of friendship. To this prudent, though not very honourable self-regard, he attributes it, that not one letter of Atticus was published, though not less than sixteen books of Cicero to Atticus have descended to the present times.

There is, it must be owned, on a slight review, a great appearance of insincerity in the conduct of Atticus. But St. Real has too hastily rejected the honourable testimony which Nepos has borne in his favour: and Middleton seems to have been too much prejudiced against him, by a single passage of Seneca. Seneca asserted, that if Cicero had not drawn Atticus into notice, he would have remained unknown. This, however, may be true, without diminishing his merit. How could he have come down to posterity, but together with the fame of his illustrious friend; since he took not an active part in politics, which might have given him a place in the page of history, and erected no literary monument for the preservation of his own glory?

If, therefore, the character of his contemporary Cornelius Nepos is established as an historian, the fame of Atticus remains undiminished by the cavils of modern inquirers.

In answer to the aspersion, that Nepos was a mean writer, and was little regarded by his own age, it must be affirmed that he was, as we are told by Gellius, the familiar friend of Cicero. It is said also, that a statue was erected to him by his countrymen of Verona. If there are defects in any of the writings that pass under his name, they are attributed to the interpolations of Æmilius Probus. His Atticus is allowed to be his own, and a masterpiece of sweet and polished composition. Cicero speaks highly of him, and he is particularly honoured by Catullus and both the Plinies. He lived at the same time with Atticus, and, had he asserted any notorious untruths, would soon have been refuted by the general voice of living witnesses, who are seldom disposed to be rashly credulous to the voice of praise.

But, setting aside authority, it may be said, that the uncontroverted matter of fact, the intimate connexion of Atticus with opposite parties, with Cæsar and with Pompey, with Antony and with Brutus, with Cicero, Clodius, and Hortensius, is a proof of uncommon management, not to say duplicity. From this fact, however, I would deduce a different inference. His friendship with the greatest men of his times, whatever were their political divisions, does honour both to his moderation and integrity. Had he concerned himself with faction, no cunning could have secured him from the hatred of some of the parties, and a subsequent proscription. Had he been mean, base, artful, he would have been unanimously despised by all. They who differed in every thing else, would have agreed in exposing one whose villany deserved contempt, and whose influence was not great enough to justify connivance. The truth seems to be, that he was superior to the little views of party. His general philanthropy was

stronger than his particular attachments, and in his warm regard for the excellence of his friends, he overlooked the failings that caused their animosity. Though he lived at a distance from the capital, and chose not to exert his influence, if he possessed any, yet such was his personal dignity, that, in his intercourse with Cicero and the greatest men of his times, he never appeared in the light of an inferior. They seem indeed to have treated him with an unusual deference, and he appears to have possessed that true dignity, which results from real wisdom and virtue, and which no artifice or external ostentation can produce.

That he cultivated a friendship with them, and did them every good office that humanity directed by judgment could suggest, is true. But we have it on record, that he courted not the fortunate alone. To those who wanted his protection, and were least likely to repay it, he was most ready to afford it. He protected the wife and family of Antony when reduced to ruin, and he sent money to Brutus when involved in want.

Devoted to letters, and to all the studies that refine and elevate the liberal mind, he was idolized at Athens, where he found a sweet asylum from the tumult of faction. His situation in this place was truly enviable. In the centre of taste and learning, with a discernment that enabled him to select and relish the best productions, beloved by all around, and even courted by the great, he spent his time at Athens, in all the elegant tranquillity of the refined Epicurus. His departure from it was publicly lamented, and the regret of that discerning people reflects an honour on him, far greater than an ovation.

Though a man of taste, of letters, of important connexions, he was yet enabled to give attention to

domestic œconomy. His family regulations were peculiar indeed, but such as became a philosopher. All his servants were qualified to read to him, and to perform the office of amanuenses. He was elegant, says Nepos, not magnificent; splendid, not profuse. The unaffected beauty of delicate neatness was his object, not the ostentation of opulence.

A very distinguished and honourable part of his character was, his utter detestation of deceit. He abhorred a lie. A circumstance which renders the charge of a time-serving duplicity improbable. That he appeared little affected with his friend Cicero's misfortunes, is not so much to be attributed to insincerity, as to some apparently weak conduct in Cicero himself. And perhaps Cicero complained of it without sufficient reason; for adversity is querulous.

The goodness of his disposition was displayed in the constancy of his attachments, and in the delight he felt in acts of beneficence; but it shone no where more amiably than in his behaviour as a son and a brother. His mother lived to the age of ninety; and he used to mention with pleasure, that he never was involved with her in one moment's disagreement. He gloried in living on the most affectionate terms with his sister.

He died in a good old age. But it is to be lamented, that, after a long life, as perfect as reason unassisted could render it, he precipitated his death by refusing sustenance, in order to avoid the recurrence of a painful disease. He acted consistently with the principles of Epicurus, who taught that pain was the greatest evil. A mind like his would have been the first to have refuted such errors, had he lived in a later age, and been the disciple of a greater than Epicurus.

Delineated by the pencil of Cornelius Nepos, he

shines forth a beautiful portrait. Nor can I see the use of those minute inquiries, which tend to lower an elevated character. The more examples of human excellence, the more honourable and advantageous to human nature. Truth, indeed, in all cases should be carefully investigated; but when it already appears established on the side of virtue, that restlessness of learned research, which seeks to sap its foundations, is not only impertinent, but criminal.

No. XIV. *On Novel Reading.*

If it be true, that the present age is more corrupt than the preceding, the great multiplication of Novels has probably contributed to its degeneracy. Fifty years ago there was scarcely a Novel in the kingdom. Romances, indeed, abounded; but they, it is supposed, were rather favourable to virtue. Their pictures of human nature were not exact, but they were flattering resemblances. By exhibiting patterns of perfection, they stimulated emulation to aim at it. They led the fancy through a beautiful wilderness of delights. and they filled the heart with pure, manly bold, and liberal sentiments.

Those books also, which were written with a view to ridicule the more absurd romantic writers, are themselves most pleasing romances, and may be read without injury to the morals. Such is the immortal work of Cervantes. Perhaps the safest books of entertainment for young people are those

of decent humour, which excite a laugh, and leave the heart little affected.

Books are more read in youth than in the advanced periods of life; but there are few perfectly well adapted to the young mind. They should be entertaining, or they will not be attended to. They should not be profound, for they will not be understood. Entertaining books there are in great numbers; but they were not written solely for young people, and are therefore too unguarded in many of their representations. They do not pay that reverence which Juvenal asserts to be due to the puerile age.

That Richardson's Novels are written with the purest intentions of promoting virtue, none can deny. But in the accomplishment of this purpose scenes are laid open, which it would be safer to conceal, and sentiments excited, which it would be more advantageous to early virtue not to admit. Dangers and temptations are pointed out; but many of them are dangers which seldom occur, and temptations by which few in comparison are assaulted. It is to be feared, the moral view is rarely regarded by youthful and inexperienced readers, who naturally pay the chief attention to the lively description of love, and its effects; and who, while they read, eagerly wish to be actors in the scenes which they admire.

The cultivated genius of Fielding entitles him to a high rank among the classics. His works exhibit a series of pictures drawn with all the descriptive fidelity of a Hogarth. They are highly entertaining, and will always be read with pleasure; but they likewise disclose scenes, which may corrupt a mind unseasoned by experience.

Smollet undoubtedly possessed great merit. He would, however, have been more generally read

among the polite and refined, if his humour had been less coarse. His Peregrine Pickle has, I am convinced, done much mischief; as all books must do, in which wicked characters are painted in captivating colours. And it is adviseable to defer the perusal of his works, till the judgment is mature.

The writings of such men do, however, display the beauties of that genius, which allure and rewards the attention of the discreet reader. But the memoirs, private histories, and curious anecdotes, imported from our neighbouring land of libertinism, have seldom any thing to recommend them to perusal but their profligacy. Yet even these, adorned with specious titles, and a pert vivacity of language, have found their way to the circulating libraries, and are often obtruded on the attention at an early age.

The English press has teemed with similar original productions. That coarse taste, which was introduced in the reign of Charles the Second, was greedily adopted by the juvenile reader. At an inflammatory age, the fuel of licentious ideas will always find a ready reception. The sentimental manner seems of late to have supplanted it. But it is matter of doubt, whether even this manner is not equally dangerous. It has given an amiable name to vice, and has obliquely excused the extravagance of the passions, by representing them as the effect of lovely sensibility. The least refined affections of humanity have lost their indelicate nature, in the ideas of many, when dignified by the epithet of sentimental; and transgressions forbidden by the laws of God and man, have been absurdly palliated, as proceeding from an excess of those finer feelings, which vanity has arrogated to itself as elegant and amiable distinctions. A softened appellation has given a degree of gracefulness to moral deformity.

The languishing and affectedly sentimental compositions formed on the pattern of Sterne, or of other less original Novelists, not only tend to give the mind a degree of weakness, which renders it unable to resist the slightest impulse of libidinous passion, but also indirectly insinuate, that the attempt is unnatural. What then remains to support the feeble efforts of remaining virtue, but the absence of temptation?

Such books, however pernicious their tendency, are the most easily obtained. The prudence of their publishers suggests the expediency of making them conveniently portable. Every corner of the kingdom is abundantly supplied with them. In vain is youth secluded from the corruptions of the living world. Books are commonly allowed them with little restriction, as innocent amusements; yet these often pollute the heart in the recesses of the closet, inflame the passions at a distance from temptation, and teach all the malignity of vice in solitude.

There is another evil arising from a too early attention to Novels. They fix attention so deeply, and afford so lively a pleasure, that the mind once accustomed to them cannot submit to the painful task of serious study. Authentic history becomes insipid. The reserved graces of the chaste matron Truth pass unobserved, amidst the gaudy and painted decorations of fiction. The boy who can procure a variety of books like Gil Blas, and the Devil upon Two Sticks, will no longer think his Livy, his Sallust, his Homer, or his Virgil pleasing. He will not study old Lilly, while he can read Pamela and Tom Jones, and a thousand inferior and more dangerous novels.

When the judgment is ripened by reflection, and the morals out of danger, every well-written book

will claim attention. The man of application may always find agreeable refreshment, after severer study, in the amusing pages of a Fielding; but the fungous production of the common Novel-wright will be too insignificant to attract his notice.

The extreme insipidity of some of our later Novels, it might have been supposed, would have prevented their reception. But insipid minds find in them entertainment congenial to their nature. And, indeed, the futility of the modern Novel almost precludes its power of causing any other mischief, than the consumption of time that might be more usefully employed.

If, however, Novels are to be prohibited, in what, it will be asked, can the young mind employ itself during the hours of necessary leisure? To this it may be answered, that when the sweetened poison is removed, plain and wholesome food will always be relished. The growing mind will crave nourishment, and will gladly seek it in true histories, written in a pleasing and easy style, on purpose for its use. Voyages and travels, when not obscured by scientific observations, are always delightful to youthful curiosity. From interesting narratives, like those of Telemachus, and Robinson Crusoe, a mind not vitiated by a taste for licentious Novels will derive a very sensible pleasure. Let the boy's library consist of such books as Rollin's History, Plutarch's Lives, and the Spectators; and, together with the improvement of his morals and understanding, which he must derive from reading them, he will have it in his power to spend his vacant time in such mental amusements as are truly and permanently delightful.

No. XV. *On Simplicity of Style in Prosaic Composition.*

Food that gives the liveliest pleasure on the first taste, frequently disgusts on repetition; and those things which please the palate without satiety, are such as agitate but moderately, and perhaps originally caused a disagreeable sensation. Mental food is also found by experience to nourish most, and delight the longest, when it is not lusciously sweet. Profuse ornament and unnecessary graces, though they may transport the reader on a first perusal, commonly occasion a kind of intellectual surfeit, which prevents a second.

Immoderate embellishment is the mark of a puerile taste, of a weak judgment, and a little genius. It conveys the idea of too great a labour to please; an idea, which excludes the appearance of ease, without which it is difficult to effect the purpose of pleasing. If the reader enters into the author's spirit, he finds his emotions too rapidly excited to be consistent with pleasurable feelings. Works acknowledged to be written with true taste, are found for the most part to raise gentle emotions; and, when it is necessary to call up the more violent, the effect is improved from the rarity of the attempt. There is a certain equable flow of spirits, which keeps the mind in a tone for the admission of durable pleasure; but which, when hurried or exalted beyond its natural state, terminates in disgust.

There are several books very popular in the present age, among the youthful and the inexperienced,

which have a sweetness that palls on the taste, and a grandeur that swells to a bloated turgidity. Such are the writings of some modern Germans. The Death of Abel is generally read, and preferred by many to all the productions of Greece, Rome, and England. The success of this work has given rise to others on the same plan, inferior to this in its real merits, and labouring under the same fault of redundant decoration. What others may feel, I know not; but I would no more be obliged to read the works of Gesner repeatedly, than to make a frequent meal on the honey-comb.

The Meditations of Hervey, and many books of devotion, are written in that rhapsodic style, which wearies by its constant efforts to elevate the mind to extacy. They have, it is true, a useful effect on the rude and uncultivated, who are seldom penetrated but by forcible impressions; but the pleasure they give is not sufficiently elegant and refined to attach the more polished reader.

Poetical prose, as all such writings may be called, seems indeed by no means correspondent to classical ideas of beauty. There is no model of it among writers in the golden ages, and it has seldom been attempted by the first rank of moderns. Fenelon indeed succeeded in it, but he richly intermixed the beautiful flowers originally culled by Homer and Virgil. Genius like his, assisted by classical learning, may give a grace to compositions formed on plans not quite conformable to the most approved taste.

Many modern sermons, while their authors aimed at sublimity and a highly figurative eloquence, have become turgid and affected. The simple majesty of the sacred writings affords a proper model for sacred oratory; and it must be owned, to the honour of the regular clergy, that they have commonly

imitated it; and that the enthusiastic and pompous harangue has usually been the production of those who have renounced reason in matters of taste as well as of religion. Addressed to the meanest capacities in the lowest orders, it may have produced a desirable effect in compelling their attention, and in warming their inflammable passions. But, it is to be feared, its effect was but temporary, and it is certain that it can never possess a place among the elegant works of literature.

It is agreeable to the mind to be occasionally roused by a powerful stroke; but it suffers a kind of smart, from a continual repetition of the blow. It is merely teazed and wearied by the feeble yet uninterrupted attacks of the unskilful writer, who mistakes the itch of scribbling for the impulse of genius.

The Bible, the Iliad, and Shakspeare's works, are allowed to be the sublimest books that the world can exhibit. They are also truly simple; and the reader is the more affected by their indisputable sublimity, because his attention is not wearied by ineffectual attempts at it. He who is acquainted with Longinus will remember, that the instances adduced by that great pattern of the excellence he describes, are not remarkable for a glaring or a pompous style, but derive their claim to sublimity from a noble energy of thought, modestly set off by a proper expression.

No author has been more universally approved than Xenophon. Yet his writings display no appearance of splendor or majesty; nothing elevated or adorned with figures; no affectation of superfluous ornament. His merit is an unaffected sweetness, which no affectation can obtain. The graces seem to have conspired to form the becoming texture of his composition. And yet, perhaps, a common

reader would neglect him, because the easy and natural air of his narrative rouses no violent emotion. More refined understandings peruse him with delight; and Cicero has recorded that Scipio, when once he had opened the books of Xenophon, would with difficulty be prevailed with to close them. His style, says the same great orator and critic, is sweeter than honey, and the muses themselves seem to have spoken from his mouth.

Julius Cæsar is thought to have resembled him in his style, as he did in the circumstance of profession. He has nothing florid or grand, but, like a gentle river, flows on with a surface unruffled. A wonderful instance of moderation, to have recounted his own achievements with accuracy, yet without being, for a moment, betrayed into an unbecoming pomp either of diction or representation. Yet with all the gracefulness of modesty and simplicity, he has an air of grandeur that commands respect. In comparison with this, ostentatious ornament would have been contemptible deformity.

Cicero, who understood and valued the simplicity of Xenophon, was, however, himself sometimes guilty of its violation. He adopted the Asiatic manner in some of his orations, and they are sometimes more verbose, diffuse, and affected, than an attic taste can patiently endure. But it is a kind of sacrilege, as well as presumption, to detract from the deserved glory of a man, who in his life and writings advanced human nature to high perfection.

The French nation is an affected nation; but many of their authors have written with remarkable simplicity. Fontaine, among others, is acknowledged to have equalled, in this beauty, the ancient models. But they have writers of the other kind, and I must own, I never could admire many of their

basted orators. Even their Bossuet and their Burdaloue are not adapted to the taste of an English or an Attic audience.

Simplicity is not in general the distinguishing beuty of English writers. Their spirit and solemity of disposition have sometimes given their wrïngs an ill-placed pomp and magnificence. Bu the works of an Addison and a Sterne, and the reception they have met with, will vindicate the nation from the charge of wanting taste for simple beaty. The ancients have been much imitated in England; and where this is the case, a taste for simplicity will sometimes get the better of prevailing gothicism. The German manner, it is hoped, will never supplant the Attic.

To write in a plain style appears easy in theory; but how few in comparison have avoided the fault of unnecessary and false ornament! The greater part seem to have mistaken unwieldy corpulence for robust vigour, and to have despised the temperate habit of sound health as meagreness. The taste for finery is more general than for symmetrical beauty and chaste elegance; and many, like Nero, would not be content till they should have spoiled, by gilding it, the statue of a Lysippus.

No. XVI. *On the Prevalence of Religious Scepticism.*

Of all the methods which the vanity of man has devised with a view to acquire distinction, there is

none easier than that of professing a disbelief of he established religion. That which shocks the feelings of those with whom we converse, cannot fail of attracting notice; and, as the vain are usually confident, they utter their doubts with such an oracular and decisive air, as induces the simple to think them profoundly wise. Audacity, without ingenity, will draw the eyes of spectators, and this will sufficiently answer the purpose of the greater part of professed unbelievers. One might be diverted, if one were not hurt, by seeing a circle of silly admirers gaping and fixing their eyes on some half-learned and impudent prater, who throws out an oblique insinuation against the Bible, the clergy, or the sacrament. These are fertile topics of wit and ingenuity; but it might mortify the vanity of some very vain writers and talkers, if they would recollect, what is undoubtedly true, that it is a species of wit and ingenuity, which not only the vilest, but the most stupid and illiterate of mankind, have displayed in all its possible perfection.

There is indeed no doubt, but that vanity is one of the principal causes of infidelity. It must be the sole cause of communicating it to others by writing or conversation. For let us suppose the case of a very humane, judicious, and learned man, entertaining doubts of the truth of Christianity: if he cannot clear his doubts by examination, he will yet recollect that doubts are no certainties; and, before he endeavours to propagate his doubts, he will ask himself these questions: Am I quite convinced, that what I doubt of cannot possibly be true? If I am convinced of it, am I sure, that the publication of my opinions will not do more harm than good? Is not the disturbing of any long-established civil constitution attended with confusion, rebellion, ruin, and bloodshed? And are not the majority of men

more strongly attached to the religion than the government of their forefathers? Will it serve my country to introduce discontent of any species? May not those innovations in religion, which discontent may introduce, lead to all the evils which are caused by frenzy and fanaticism? Granting that I were able to make a party formidable enough to crush opposition, and to exterminate Christianity, still am I certain I am acting like a good member of society? For is not this system, whether well or ill founded, friendly to society? I must confess it; its greatest enemies have acknowledged it, from the first opposer to the subtle historian, who, after having vented his venom in a subtle attack, is yet at last obliged, by the force of truth, to confess, that it contains a pure, benevolent, and universal system of ethics, adapted to every duty, and every condition of life. What motive then can induce me to divulge my doubts of its authenticity? Not the good of mankind; for it is already allowed by unbelievers, that the good of mankind is interested in the belief of its divine original. Is it for my own good, and with a view to be convinced? I will not deceive myself: my motive, I suspect, is of another kind; for do I read those books, which have been already written, to satisfy similar doubts? Nothing but the vanity of appearing to be wiser than my credulous neighbours can induce me to interrupt the happiness of their undoubting belief. But vanity of this sort, which tends to disturb society, to injure the national morals, and to rob many thousand individuals of a source of sweet and solid comfort, is extreme wickedness, even according to the dictates of the religion of nature. I shall act the part of a good citizen and a good man, by conforming to a system whose beneficial influence I feel and confess; and by endeavouring to acquire a belief in that which has,

for so many centuries, been established, and which promises to sooth me in distress with the sweetest consolations, and to brighten the dismal hour of death, by the hope of a more glorious and happy state of existence. At all events, I shall have the satisfaction of having commanded myself so far, as not to have run the hazard of endangering the welfare of my fellow-creatures, either here or hereafter, by indulging a degree of vanity, which, in a creature so weak and so short-lived as myself, is a folly very inconsistent with the superior wisdom which I should arrogate.

I will venture to repeat, that all writers against Christianity, whether they introduce their remarks by sly insinuation, or in the form of a history, or whether they openly avow their design in their title-page, however they may affect even the extremes of humanity, benevolence, honour, philosophy, and enlargement of mind, are actuated by vanity and wickedness. Their motives are as mean, selfish, narrow, and in every respect unjustifiable, as the tendency of their writings is mischievous. Their malice is often impotent, through the foolish sophistry of their arguments; but, if ever it is successful, it is highly injurious: and, indeed, considering their motives, and the probable consequences of their endeavours, the infidel writer is a greater enemy to society, and consequently guiltier, according to all the principles of social union, than the thief or the traitor. Persecution would, however, only promote his cause, and his proper punishment is contempt.

It is certainly no derogation from the character of a man of sense to conform, even while he is so unfortunate as to doubt their truth, to the opinions of his country. His conformity will probably lead him to a train of actions and of thought, which, in

due time, will induce him to believe. But, if that should not happen, yet he will act, as very wise and very great men have acted, in paying a respectful deference to the avowed conviction of others. The most intelligent and powerful men of ancient Rome, not only appeared to believe a very absurd and hurtful system, but assisted in all its ceremonies as priests. Even Socrates, who evidently appears to have entertained some notions adequate to the dignity of the one great and supreme Being, yet thought it was a duty which he owed to his country, so far to conform to the wretched establishment, as to order, in his dying words, a sacrifice to Æsculapius. This conformity ought not to be confounded with hypocrisy. If it is carried to extremes, or zealously affected, it certainly is very blameable and contemptible deceit; but while it keeps within the bounds of reason and moderation, it ought to be called a decent deference to the opinions of the majority, arising from humility, and a desire to maintain the tranquillity of the state, and to continue an innocent and useful system, which has and will always greatly contribute to lessen the quantity and degree of moral and of natural evil.

The easiest, after all, or at least the most effectual method of appearing in any character is really to be, what we wish to appear. But belief is not in our power, and how can we believe what appears to us incredible? Certainly you cannot, while it appears incredible. But let me ask you, whether you have taken any pains to believe, or have at once and at a glance persuaded yourself, that the Christian religion is totally false? I am of opinion, that a great number of sceptical writers never gave themselves the trouble to read those scriptures, which they so warmly oppose. They hear objections, they read objections, and they find that men of re-

puted wit and ingenuity are often the persons from whom the objections originate. They would be reputed men of wit and ingenuity, and therefore they eagerly adopt the language and sentiments of the order. Perhaps the vanity and pride of this class of men will render all attempts to convince them abortive; but to modest doubters, and those whose good sense and good dispositions lead them to wish to adopt the religion of their country, it may not be useless to suggest advice, with a view to facilitate their conviction.

I boldly say then, that the chief thing required is, to free themselves from the pride of human reason. Humility (and surely our blindness and imperfections, are sufficient to render us humble, if we would be reasonable), humility will open our hearts, and belief will find admission. Sincere endeavours, seconded by prayers, will never fail to help our unbelief. But, alas! a fine, gay, spirited, liberal, and enlarged modern philosopher would be ashamed to be found on his knees, or with a Testament upon him. There is scarcely any vicious act, or any vicious book, which would put him so much to the blush.

A modest well-meaning man might, however, I should think, reason himself into a belief somewhat in this manner. "I find myself placed in a world "abounding with evil and misery. Under the pres- "sure of it, I feel my heart inclining, like the needle "to the north, by its natural tendency, to the Deity "for support. Man, of all animals, is the only one "who has the sense of religion. I look round to "discover to what object, and in what manner, that "part of my fellow-creatures, who live in the same "society with myself, pay their adoration. I find "a system of religion already established, and which "has been established, in the most enlightened

" countries of the earth, near two thousand years. " I resolve to examine it. It claims that respect, " at least, from its antiquity and universality. Many " difficulties appear on the first inspection. My " reason is often startled, and my belief wavers. " But I will not yet give up a point of so serious " importance, without further and closer attention " to it. I reflect, that two thousand years is a vast " space in the age of the world. How many myriads of men like myself have lived and died in the " faith during that time! And were all of them fools " or hypocrites? It could not have been. Can the " understanding of a poor individual just come into " the world, and hardly knowing where he is, comprehend on intuition an object of such magnitude, " and make the mighty discovery, which has " escaped millions of the wisest and most learned of " mortals? Or, supposing that they all perceived " the deception, am I then at last the only honest " man? I am ashamed to avow such an idea to myself. But yet, if I reject what they received, " surely I avow it in the more expressive language " of my conduct. Pride is the foundation of my " scepticism. Humility must form the basis of my " belief. I will check my own presumption, and " reject the cavils of vain and foolish philosophy. " Shall a poor weak creature, who comes up like " a flower, and is cut down, who fleeth as a shadow, " and never continueth in one stay, presume to pronounce decisively in that little period, in which " he has scarcely time to look about him before he " dies, against a system, which has strong internal " and external evidence of divine original, which is " most useful and comfortable, and which has been " thus admitted during almost twenty centuries. " No, it is the first wisdom to be humble. Humility " will be followed by grace, and grace by faith, and

" faith by salvation. It plainly appears, that I can " lose nothing by belief, but some of those excessive " and irregular enjoyments, which would destroy " my health and life; but I may possibly gain a " glory and a happiness, which shall continue to all " eternity."

No. XVII. *Family Unhappiness the frequent Cause of Immoral Conduct.*

After all our complaints of the uncertainty of human affairs, it is undoubtedly true, that more misery is produced among us by the irregularities of our tempers, than by real misfortunes.

And it happens unfortunately, that these irregularities of the temper are most apt to display themselves at our fire-sides, where every thing ought to be tranquil and serene. But the truth is, we are awed by the presence of strangers, and are afraid of appearing weak or ill-natured when we get out into the world, and so very heroically reserve all our ill-humour for our wives, children, and servants. We are meek where we might meet with opposition, but feel ourselves undauntedly bold where we are sure of no effectual resistance.

The perversion of the best things converts them to the worst. Home is certainly well-adapted to repose and solid enjoyment. Among parents and brothers, and all the tender charities of private life, the gentler affections, the operations of which are always attended with feelings purely and perma-

nently pleasurable, find ample scope for exertion. The experienced have often declared, after wearying themselves in pursuing phantoms, that they have found a substantial happiness in the domestic circle. Hither they have returned from their wild excursions in the regions of dissipation; as the bird, after fluttering in the air, descends into her nest, to partake and to increase its genial warmth with her mate and with her young ones.

Such and so sweet are the comforts of home, when it is not perverted by the folly and weakness of man. Indifference, and a carelessness about pleasing those whom it is our best interest to please, often render it a scene of dulness and insipidity. Happy if this were the whole of the evil. But the transition from the negative state of not being pleased, to positive ill-humour, is almost unavoidable. Fretfulness and peevishness arise, as nettles vegetate, spontaneously, where no salutary plants are cultivated. One unkind expression infallibly generates many others. Trifles light as air are able to kindle the blaze of contention. By frequent conflicts and unreserved familiarity, all that mutual respect which is necessary to preserve love, even in the most intimate connections, is entirely lost, and the faint affection which remains is too feeble to be felt amid the furious operation of the hateful passions. Farewell peace and tranquillity, and cheerful converse, and all the boasted comforts of the family circle. The nest which should preserve a perpetual warmth by the constancy of paternal and conjugal affection, is rendered cold and joyless. In the place of the soft down which should cover it, are substituted thorns and briars. The waters of strife, to make use of the beautiful allusion of Scripture, rush in with impetuous violence, and ruffle and discolour that stream, which, in its natural and un-

disturbed current, devolves its waters all smooth and limpid.

But it is not necessary to expatiate on the misery of family dissention. I mean more particularly to suggest, that family dissention, besides all its own immediate evils, is the fruitful parent of moral misconduct.

When the several parts which compose a family find themselves uneasy in that home which is naturally the seat of mutual enjoyment, they are led from the straight road, to pursue their happiness through a devious wild. The son, arrived at years of maturity, who is treated harshly at home, will seldom spend his evenings at the fire-side. If he lives in the metropolis, he will fly for refuge to the places of public diversion. There, it is very probable, some unhappy connexion will be formed, which cannot be continued without a plentiful supply of money. Money, it is probable, cannot be procured honestly but from the parent: but money must be, at all events, procured. What then remains, but to take those methods which sharpers have invented, and which sooner or later, lead to their proper punishments, pain, and shame, and death?

But though the consequences are not always such as the operation of human laws produces, yet they are always terrible, and destructive of happiness. Misery is indeed the necessary result of all deviation from virtue; but early debauchery, early disease, early profligacy of all kinds, are peculiarly fruitful of wretchedness; as they sow the seeds of misery in the spring of life, when all that is sown strikes deep root, and buds, and blossoms, and brings forth fruit an hundred-fold.

In the disagreements between children and parents, it is certain that the children are usually most

in fault. Their violent passions and defective experience render them disobedient and undutiful. Their love of pleasure operates so violently, as often to destroy the force of filial affection. A parent is stung to the heart by the ingratitude of a child. He checks his precipitancy, and perhaps with too little command of temper; for who indeed can always hold the reins? Asperity produces asperity. But the child was the aggressor, and therefore deserves a great part of the misery which ensues. It is, however, certain, that the parent is often imprudent, as well as the child undutiful. He should endeavour to render home agreeable by gentleness and reasonable indulgence: for man at every age seeks to be pleased, but more particularly at the juvenile age. He should indeed maintain his authority; but it should be like the mild dominion of a limited monarch, not the iron rule of a tyrant. If home is rendered pleasing, it will not long be deserted. The prodigal will soon return when his father's house is always ready to receive him with joy.

What is said of the consequences of domestic disunion to sons, is equally to be applied to daughters. Indeed, as the misconduct of daughters is more fatal to family peace, though not more heinous in a moral view, particular care should be taken to render them attached to the comforts of the family circle. When their home is disagreeable, they will be ready to make any exchange! and will often lose their characters, virtue, and happiness, in the pursuit of it. Indeed the female character and happiness are so easily injured, that no solicitude can be too great in their preservation. But prudence is necessary in every good cause, as well as zeal; and it is found by experience, that the gentlest method of government, if it is limited and directed by good sense, is the best. It ought indeed to be steady,

but not rigid: and every pleasure which is innocent in itself and in its consequences, ought to be admitted, with a view to render less disagreeable that unwinking vigilance which a delicate and sensible father will judge necessary in the care of daughters.

To what wickedness, as well as wretchedness, matrimonial disagreements lead, every day's history will clearly inform us. When the husband is driven from his home by a termagant, he will seek enjoyment, which is denied him at his own home, in the haunts of vice, and in the riots of intemperance: nor can female corruption be wondered at, though it must be greatly pitied and regretted, when in the heart which love and friendship should warm, hatred is found to rankle. Conjugal infelicity not only renders life most uncomfortable, but leads to a desperate dissoluteness and carelessness in life and manners, which terminates in ruin of health, peace, and fortune. If we may form a judgment from the divorces and separations which happen in the gay world, we may conclude, that the present manners are highly unfavourable to conjugal felicity. And we see, consistently with my theory, that the consequence of these domestic disagreements is the prevalence of vice in a very predominant degree, as well as of misery.

But it avails little to point out evils without recommending a remedy. One of the first rules which suggests itself is, that families should endeavour, by often and seriously reflecting on the subject to convince themselves, that not only the enjoyment, but the virtue of every individual greatly depends on union. When they are convinced of this, they will endeavour to promote it; and it fortunately happens, that the very wish and attempt of every individual in the family must infallibly secure success. It may indeed be difficult to restrain the

occasional sallies of temper; but where there is, in the more dispassionate moments, a settled desire to preserve union, the transient violence of passion will not often produce a lasting rupture.

It is another most excellent rule to avoid a *gross familiarity*, even where the connexion is most intimate. The human heart is so constituted as to love respect. It would indeed be unnatural in very intimate friends to behave to each other with stiffness; but there is a delicacy of manner, and a flattering deference, which tends to preserve that degree of esteem which is necessary to support affection, and which is lost in contempt when a too great familiarity is allowed. An habitual politeness of manners will prevent even indifference from degenerating to hatred. It will refine, exalt and perpetuate affection.

But the best and most efficacious rule is, that we should not think our moral and religious duties are only to be practised in public, and in the sight of those from whose applause we expect the gratification of our vanity, ambition, or avarice; but that we should be equally attentive to our behaviour among those who can only repay us by reciprocal love. We must show the sincerity of our principles and professions by acting consistently with them, not only in the senate, in the field, in the pulpit, at the bar, or at any other public assembly, but at the *fire-side*.

No. XVIII. *Hints to young Men who are designed for Orders.*

It is no reproach to the church to say, that it is supplied with ministers by the emoluments it affords. Men must be supported; and if the prospect of support is one principle motive in impelling them to enter on the clerical office, it is a natural, a reasonable motive, and in no respect disgraceful. A son, it is true, is destined to the church because his father or friend is the patron of a living; or he is placed at a free-school, and is carried on to college with a view to a scholarship; or he fixes on the profession himself from a love of letters and tranquillity, and from the hope of gaining a quiet and easy, though small stipend, in a liberal and an useful employment. There is nothing in all this unreasonable; and though hypocrisy and fanaticism may disclaim such motives, yet, if he who is actuated by them, as the greater part certainly are, prepares himself duly for entrance on the office, and discharges its duties conscientiously when he is in it, he is a worthy and valuable clergyman, and a better man than they who revile him.

Whichever of the above causes may have inclined a young man to devote himself to the church, I will suppose him just dismissed from his school, and will submit to his consideration a few remarks, which, I hope, will be useful. With respect to enthusiasts, I will not presume to direct them. They, indeed, are guided by a superior illumination, to which I cannot confidently pretend.

To facilitate the tenure of some preferments, and to satisfy the prejudices of the world, it will be

necessary to take academical degrees. This cannot reputably be done without becoming a member of an English university. If the finances of the student are inadequate to his support, he will probably be tempted to reside in one of them, for the sake of the emoluments of scholarships, fellowships, or exhibitions. If, indeed, a stricter discipline, and a few regulations in the exercises, should take place, he will do right to fix his residence in the venerable seats of learning, where every convenience for the purposes of study is liberally afforded.

But if neither the discipline nor the statutes are altered, I would advise him, if he were my own child, barely to keep two terms a-year for several years, which may be done in the space of five or six weeks only spent for four or five years in the universities, so as to derive as good a right by the statutes, as any other members, to the honours bestowed by an university convocation. In Oxford, for instance, three weeks spent at Easter, and a fortnight in act term, are the seasons I recommend. And the residence during this short time, for five or six years, will be sufficient for the purpose. This excursion may furnish an agreeable variety, and the time may be well spent in examining the public libraries, and in attending the public lecturers, who contrive to circumscribe their courses within the limits of the few weeks required by the statutes to keep a term. With respect to a voluntary residence at either university during six or eight months at a time, though certainly right if a reformation should take place, I consider it, in their present state, as dangerous, expensive, and attended with no advantage great enough to compensate the disadvantage, and which may not be enjoyed abundantly better in the family of a worthy and learned clergyman in a country village. By all means let

the long intervals be employed in study, for which the silence of a village retreat, provided a sufficient number of books are to be procured, is far better accommodated than the society of noisy young men, who are suffered to do as they please by night and by day; who are above control; and who cause the college to resemble the tavern and the brothel. I seriously declare, I have no cause to express myself with resentment on the subject of the universities. I say what I think, and I say it because it would ill become me to conceal any thing in the knowledge of which ingenuous youth is greatly interested.

If a young man is fortunate enough to find a worthy clergyman who will be his companion and instructor from nineteen to twenty-three, he will direct the studies and the conduct. But as I know that all will not be able to find such an one, and that the greater part cannot, from the slenderness of their fortune, make such a compensation as would be required by him, when found, I shall proceed to offer my advice.

At the age of one-and-twenty, it will be proper to begin the studies preparatory to ordination. If it is possible, a young man of similar views and intentions should be procured as an associate. I say then, that without any tutor, by the direction of books, they may thus, with due application, make at least as great an improvement in this retreat, as they could in any university. In these circumstances, they would be less exposed to dissipation; and, for that reason among others, they would be more attached to study, and would succeed in it better.

Such would be my plan till the universities should be reformed. But since many reasons will concur to induce parents to send their sons to the universities as usual, such as the expectation of various

pecuniary advantages, the opportunities of forming connexions, the fear of singularity, and indeed the difficulty of deviating from the accustomed path, I will suppose a student just matriculated, and will submit to his opinion the following suggestions:

He is sent to college to improve his mind and morals, to become a good scholar, and a good man; not a man of pleasure, nor a man of fashion Let him, then, resolve to pursue his studies indefatigably, and pray God Almighty to preserve his innocence, and to be a guardian to him, now he is removed from the fostering wing of an affectionate parent. Let him beware of being overcome by ridicule, by which he will certainly be attacked. Let him be steady in his principles, and spirited in his actions; exhibiting that vivacity and resolution in his good purposes which others do in their bad ones. Let him recollect, that he is preparing for a sacred office, and make his conduct consistent with his views. But, with all his virtues and all his prudence, let him avoid the appearance of unnecessary stiffness, of hypocrisy, or of more singularity than is required for the preservation of his principles. Let him also most carefully avoid a censorious disposition. It is his business to advance his own good qualities to all attainable perfection; not to be morose, or calumnious on the defects and faults of others. He will see, pity, and avoid them; but he will leave the office of correction to those who ought to assume it.

The foolish exercises performed in the public schools are too ridiculous to deserve a serious censure: but as his degree may be denied him, if he fails in any particular of this formal trifling, he must pay to them, and to the studies which are connected with them, so much attention, and no more, as will qualify him to perform them with faci-

lity and confidence. The classics in general, the Hebrew language, and the books introductory to divinity, will claim all his serious application.

The preparatory improvements should not be confined to that moderate degree of excellence which may be required in a chaplain's examination. They who aim only at passing an examination, usually relinquish their studies when the examination is past. With a good character, moderate attainments, and those recommendatory testimonies which are easily procured, there is no danger of rejection. But he who deserves to succeed will not be satisfied without making a solid improvement in useful theology.

A young clergyman, if he wishes to be esteemed by his parishioners, and to promote their welfare, must take particular care, on first entering on his cure, that he makes favourable impressions on the subject of his morals. However young, he must remember, that, by assuming the office of a public and religious instructor, he has assumed a grave character. If he is not grave he may indeed be pardoned, or be pitied; but he will not be valued. I mean not that he should be austere, nor puritanical: but that he should avoid even the appearance of that disgustful levity of manners, and excessive profligacy, which has disgraced the younger clergy of the times. That real levity and real profligacy are to be avoided, I need not inform him; but at the same time I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that the serious part of mankind have long had just reason to express their abhorrence at the frequent occurrence of the *professed clerical libertine*. He will avoid evil, and the appearance of evil. If he cannot bring his mind to sacrifice youthful follies to the dignity of his profession, he should not engage in it. The public have long remarked

with indignation, that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchees, and gamesters, who figure at the watering places, and all public places of resort, are young men of the sacerdotal order.

They plead that they are young, and youth must excuse the follies that result from the too ardent love of pleasure, If they are young, they thought themselves old enough to assume the office of instructors of mankind; and to warn their fellow-creatures to avoid those very irregularities which they not only practise, but in which they glory, as marks of spirit.

The clergyman who would be respected, and every clergyman would be respected if he would be useful, must preserve a decency of dress.

He must be affable; but his affability must be tempered with reserve.

He must be regular in the performance of parochial duty, and pay at least as much attention to the poor as to the rich.

He must read prayers, and preach, with fervency and earnestness; not as if he considered his business as a job, by which he is to earn a certain pay, or as if he did not believe what he uttered. His eloquence will be forcible, but not ranting; pathetic, but not whining.

He must not be covetous, nor very rigid in exacting of the poor his just dues.

He must be benevolent and beneficent in an exemplary degree; winning men by persuasion, forgiving injuries, and teaching more forcibly by his life than his discourses.

He must not be a *preferment-hunter;* for we cannot esteem him, who, while he talks of crowns of glory, appears to fix his own heart on a stall or a mitre.

No. XIX. *Hints to young Men who are designed for a Military or Naval Life.*

THE exigencies of the state have called for an increase of the military orders, and it must be owned that our British youth has not been slow to obey the summons; for there is scarcely a town or village in the kingdom where you will not meet, as you pass along, cockades, epaulettes, and scarlet coats, accompanied with fierce looks and struts *à la militaire*. The military spirit is indeed so widely diffused, that there is reason to believe the nation will shortly become a nation of warriors. But as the military spirit is rather adverse to the gentle arts of peace, and as the young heroes are apt to lay down their books as soon as they take up their arms, I will suggest to them a few hints, which may probably prevent their heroism from degenerating to brutality. I would not wish them to imagine, that the moment they have put their hats on sideways, and dressed themselves at their toilettes in complete uniform, they are soldiers. They may be pretty figures, and, doubtless will be able to do great execution at an assembly; but it does not follow that they will be equally successful on the plains of Saratoga.

Many, who enter on the profession while they are striplings, are apt to suppose, that a sword, a cockade, and a shoulder-knot, constitute them complete gentlemen. These, however, will not constitute them men, and much less gentlemen: for an ignorant, rude, and mean mind under a red coat is no less visible, and more contemptible, than if

it appeared under rags, and in the dress of a mechanic.

Almost all the professions have some characteristic manners, which the professors adopt, with little examination as necessary and as honourable distinctions. It happens unfortunately, that vulgarity, profligacy, libertinism, and infidelity, are thought by weaker minds almost as necessary a part of a soldier's uniform as his shoulder-knot. To hesitate at an oath, to decline intoxication, to profess a regard for religion, would be almost as ignominious as to refuse a challenge. Insolvency and disease, some of the greatest misfortunes which can befal a human creature, are often thought to add a grace to the military man. He dresses, he drinks, he blusters, he spends his money, he ruins his constitution and his peace; but the compensation for all this is, that he is a favourite of the ladies: and really in this his ultimate object he often succeeds: for many of them are as weak as himself, and are ready to run wild at the sight of a red coat. Age and ugliness, disease and rotteness, are all lost in the irresistible charms of a piece of scarlet broad-cloth; and many a young man, who has been repulsed in a common dress, has been arrayed by his tailor for the battle, and gained a complete victory. The cross-legged artist has often metamorphosed a Thersites into an Adonis. But this silly attachment of the women tends immediately to increase that profligacy which has ever been the fertile source of female misery: and now, when you can hardly turn without seeing a military man, the evil must necessarily be increased, and consequently it is the more desirable to administer a remedy.

But here I will interrupt my remarks, to assure the reader, that the puerile vanity and studied pro-

fligacy which I have described, is only to be found in those who have been too early commissioned, and have been entered on the soldier's life destitute of the gentleman's education. There are indeed many such; for parents, who have interest, are desirous of entering their sons early, that they may arrive at an exalted post in the prime of manhood. Hence it happens, that the time which should be employed in a virtuous course of literary discipline, is thrown away amidst the dissoluteness of a camp, or a barrack, or a ship's crew; and the poor youth, though he is lifted over the heads of veterans, and assumes all the haughty airs of a great man, possesses a mind only distinguished from that of his drummer, or his boatswain, by superior insolence. He has no taste: his pleasures are gross; he is a distinguished brute indeed; but his distinction consists only in superior brutality; his conduct is caprice, and his courage insensibility. He lives a life of misery, varied only by the short gleams of vicious and infamous indulgences. Of such misery as this it is surely friendly to attempt the prevention. If the present generation may not profit by the suggestions which I offer, the succeeding one may be rescued from perdition. But, lest what I am compelled to say of the uneducated and unprincipled part of the profession should be extended too far, I must add, that I am well convinced that a great part of the army consists of men who have entered on the military profession from the best motives, and have carried into the camp the accomplishments of the school.

To the other part, whose misfortune it has been to be engaged in an unsettled life, without instruction in any of the valuable parts of science, without moral principles, or even the idea of religion, it may not be useless to address a few admonitions.

Let them persuade themselves of the beauty, the value, and the pleasures of a cultivated mind. Let them compare one of their profession who possesses the graces of the understanding, with another of equal rank whose ideas are low, whose sentiments are narrow and selfish, whose pleasures are gross, and who has no other method of employing his leisure but in drunkenness and debauchery. The contrast will exhibit the deformity which I am describing in striking colours. The one is respected and beloved; happy in himself, and the cause of happiness in others: the other, though he is always pursuing pleasure, never finds it pure and exalted; but spends a feverish being in vanity and vice, and precipitates that dissolution at which all but himself have reason to rejoice.

Now the leisure which this profession frequently enjoys above all others, as it is often the cause of vice, so it affords a fine opportunity for making improvement. But how should the uncultivated soldier begin? He was taken from his school before he had laid any foundation on which he might build the fabric of learning. Where this is the case, we must not hope that he will be able to acquire the learned languages: but if he acquires a taste for English books, he will soon find his nature improved by reading the best of them, like the wild stock when grafted with a cion of a delicious and valuable fruit-tree.

In every profession there is a certain quantity of practical and technical knowledge, which ought to be particularly attended to, because the profession cannot be exercised without it. Tactics and fortification, with the sciences immediately connected with them, must be studied, as essentially necessary to the military and naval officer. But if he stops here, he will still retain the narrowness of an artist, who seeks

no farther skill than is necessary to procure the lucrative advantages of his art.

History, in all its parts, will properly excite and reward the attention of the soldier. The translations of Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon, Livy, Sallust, will amuse and instruct his mind with valuable knowledge, and in the end will give him more pleasure than a meagre novel borrowed at a circulating library. I would advise him to take with him Pope's Homer when he goes to the camp, and lay it under his pillow, and meditate on it in the morning. The entertaining of noble thoughts will lead to noble actions; and the poor, debauched, and insolvent officer, beset with bailiffs and surgeons, will become, in this course of discipline, a sensible and prudent man, and deserve the appellation of a true hero; a title which can never be bestowed on a man whose courage wants conduct, and whose honour wants honesty.

He should recollect, that he has a soul like men who do not wear a red coat; and should think of that immortality which the wisest of mankind have expected. Let him not be ashamed of reading the Scriptures, or those excellent comments upon them, the sermons of our great English divines. It is false valour which sets God and eternity at defiance; and it is real cowardice to be afraid of the ridicule which the performance of religious, or any other duty, may incur. He is often heard to say he is upon duty, and it were to be wished he considered the meaning of the word in its full extent.

What is said to military men, must be extended to mariners. They have often sunk indeed far beneath the level of humanity. The leisure and confinement of a ship ought certainly to lead them to seek improvement in letters. But yet a medium is to be observed. Their refinement must not be ex-

cessive, lest the fastidiousness of extreme delicacy should destroy the manly bravery and hardiness of the English sailor.

In attending to these admonitions, it will be found, that, while the happiness of many unfortunate individuals is increased, the glory and welfare of the community will be better secured. We shall have less to fear from our enemies, and less from a standing army; for an enlightened understanding, which considers the nature of society, will see the propriety of subjecting, on all domestic emergencies, the military to the civil power.

I cannot close this subject without applauding those generous and liberal men, who, when their country was threatened with invasion, forsook all the comforts of their homes, and, without previous habits to enure them, submitted with alacrity to all the inconveniencies of a camp, and the unsettled life of a soldier. Their judicious and patriotic ardour evinces that they wear a sword for their country's good, and are ready to draw it, at a moment's warning, on every foreign or domestic enemy.

No. XX. *On the Amusements of Sunday.*

THE institution of a day devoted to rest and reflection, after six days spent in labour and dissipation, is not only wise in a political and religious view, but highly agreeable to the nature of man. The human mind is so constituted by nature, as to make greater advances by short flights frequently repeated, than

by uninterrupted progression. After the cessation of a whole day, the operations of the week are begun with fresh ardour, and acquire a degree of novelty; a quality which possesses a most powerful effect in stimulating to application. In truth, no time is lost to the public by the observation of a Sabbath; for the loss of a few hours is amply compensated by the additional vigour and spirit which are given to human activity by the agreeable vicissitude. A thousand reasons might be assigned for the observation of it, supposing it wanted any, superadded to the sanction of divine authority. Among others, the long duration of this establishment is, in my opinion, an argument greatly in its favour; for human affairs, in a long course of years, settle, for the most part, like water, in their proper level and situation.

It may, then, be numbered among the follies of modern innovators, and pretenders to superior enlargement of mind and freedom from prejudice, that they have endeavoured to destroy the sanctity, and, in course, the essential purposes of this sacred institution. They have laboured to render it a day of public and pleasurable diversion; and, if they had succeeded, they would have made Sunday in no respect different from the other days of the week: for if one man was allowed to pursue pleasure at the usual public places, another, who felt the influence of avarice more than of the love of pleasure, would justly have claimed a right to pursue his lucrative labour. And, indeed, it must be owned, that there would be far less harm in prosecuting the designs of honest industry, than in relaxing the nerves of the mind by a dissolute pursuit of nominal pleasures; of such pleasures as usually terminate in pain, disease, and ruin. The national spirit and strength must be impaired by national corruption.

Feebleness of mind is the unavoidable effect of excessive dissipation; but how shall the political machine perform its movements with efficacy, when the minds of the people, the springs of the whole, have lost their elasticity? If you were to prohibit honest labour, and allow public pleasures, Sunday would become a day of uncontrolled debauchery and drunkenness. It would infallibly sink the lower classes to that degenerate state in which they appear in some neighbouring countries, and would consequently facilitate the annihilation of civil liberty.

The decent observation of Sunday is indeed to be urged by arguments of a nature greatly superior to political reasons: but a few political ones are here offered; because, with the opposers of the observation of the Sabbath, political arguments are more likely to have weight than religious. They who hold the Bible so cheap as to have confuted, in their own minds, every thing it contains, without ever having looked into it, are often idolaters of *Magna Charta*. And though it might be in vain to urge, that Sunday should be decently kept for the sake of promoting the interests of the gospel, it would probably be an inducement to pay it all due attention, if we could convince certain persons that a decent regard to it promotes such sentiments and principles among the people as have a tendency to support the Bill of Rights, and secure the Protestant succession. Every thing which promotes virtue is salutary to the mind, considered only as a medicine; as a bracer, if I may so say, or a corroborative remedy. Now strength and vigour of mind are absolutely necessary, if we would constantly entertain an adequate idea of the blessings of liberty, and take effectual methods to defend it when it is infringed.

But, setting aside both religious and political arguments, or allowing them all their force, still it will be urged by great numbers, and those too in the higher spheres of life, that all business being prohibited on Sundays, they are really at a loss to spend their time. "Let us then," say they, "since we "are forbidden to work, let us play. Let us have "public diversions. There can be no harm in a "polite promenade. Indeed" (they insist) "if it "were not for the prejudices of the *canaille*, it "would be right to permit more places of public "diversion on Sundays than on other days; obviously "because we have nothing else to do but to attend "to them. But English prejudices are too deeply "rooted to be eradicated. On the continent, the "return of Sunday is delightful; but in our gloomy "island it is a blank in existence, and ought to be "blotted out of the calendar."

The arguments indeed, such as they are, were of late presented in the best form, I presume, which they will admit, by one of those noble senators, who opposed the late laudable act for the suppression of some enormities which had been introduced as the pastime of the sabbath; and whose speech would condemn him to eternal infamy, if its extreme insignificancy did not reverse the sentence, and ensure it a friendly and speedy oblivion.

Such arguments are indeed attended with their own refutation; but it is certainly true, that some orders among us are distressed for methods of employing their time on a Sunday. I will therefore beg leave, from motives of compassion, to suggest some hints, which may contribute to relieve them from the very painful situation of not knowing how to pass away the lagging hours. Sunday is selected by them for travelling; and the high roads on a Sunday are crowded with coaches adorned with

coronets. But to Christians there are other employments peculiar to the day, which will leave no part of it disengaged. If they are not Christians, their contempt of the Sabbath is one of the least of their errors, and, before it can be removed, a belief must be produced; to attempt which does not fall within the limits or design of this paper.

But supposing them Christians, let us endeavour to provide amusement for them during the twelve hours in every seven days, in which the business of the world is precluded. If lords and dukes would condescend to go to their parish-church, they might find themselves well employed from ten o'clock till twelve. To the prayers they can have no reasonable objection; and, with respect to the sermon, though its diction or its sentiments may not be excellent, yet in the present times, the want of merit is usually compensated by brevity. And the great man may comfort himself during its continuance with reflecting, that, though he is neither pleased nor instructed by it, yet he himself is preaching in effect a most persuasive sermon by giving his attendance. His example will attract many auditors, and bad indeed must be the discourse from which the vulgar hearer cannot derive much advantage. If any charitable purpose is to be accomplished, and there never passes a Sunday, but in the metropolis many such purposes are to be accomplished, the bare presence of a man in high life will contribute greatly to the pecuniary collection. And, if a peer of the realm was as willing to give his presence at a charity-sermon as at a horse-race, to contribute to the support of orphans and widows, as to keep a stud and a pack of hounds, perhaps he would find himself no loser even in the grand object of his life, the enjoyment of pleasure.

The interval between the morning and evening

service may surely be spent in reading, or in improving conversation. The rest of the day even to eight o'clock, may be spent in the metropolis at church (if any one choses it), for evening lectures abound. And, though there is no obligation to attend at more than the established times, yet no man can say there are no public places of resort, when he can scarcely turn a corner without seeing a church-door open, and hearing a bell importunately inviting him to enter.

The little time which remains after the usual religious duties of the day, may certainly be spent in such a manner as to cause no tedium, even though Carlisle-house is shut, and the rigid laws forbid us to enter Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and the theatres. A cheerful walk amidst rural scenes is capable of affording, in fine weather, a very sensible pleasure. In all seasons, at all hours, and in all weathers, conversation is capable of affording an exquisite delight; and books, of improving, exalting, refining, and captivating the human mind. He who calls in question the truth of this, must allow his hearers to call in question his claim to rationality.

The subordinate classes, for I have hitherto been speaking of the higher, seldom complain that they know not what to do on a Sunday. To them it is a joyful festival. They, for the most part, are constant attendants at church; and the decency of their habits and appearance, the cleanliness which they display, the opportunity they enjoy of meeting their neighbours in the same regular and decent situation with themselves, render Sunday highly advantageous to them, exclusively of its religious advantages. They usually fill up the intervals of divine service with a rural walk, and their little indulgences at the tea-houses are highly proper and allowable. They are confined to sedentary and laborious work

during the week, and a walk in the fresh air is most conducive to their health, while it affords them a very lively pleasure, such a pleasure indeed as we have all felt in Milton's famous description of it. The common people are sufficiently delighted with such enjoyments, and would really be displeased with those public diversions which our travelled reformers have desired to introduce.

Neither are they in want of disputing societies to fill up their time. There are parish-churches in abundance. After they have attended at them, it is far better that they should walk in the air, than be pent up in a close room and putrifying air, where their health must suffer more than even in the exercise of their handicraft trade or vocation. But that indeed is one of the least of the evils which they must endure, were they allowed to attend at every turbulent assembly, which either the avaricious or the discontented may convene. Weak understandings are easily led astray by weak arguments. Their own morals and happiness, and the welfare of the church and state, are greatly interested in the suppression of those houses, which were lately opened under the arrogant name of theological schools. The act which suppressed them reflects honour on the British senate. Such acts as this would indeed excite the zeal of the good and religious on the side of the legislature, and would rouse, among those whose actions must carry weight with them because their characters are respected, such a spirit and unanimity, as would enable the executive part of government to support itself with honour and tranquillity at home, and act with irresistible vigour abroad.

Why should the present race, whether high or low, stand more in need of public diversions on a Sunday than our forefathers in the last and in the

beginning of the present century? No good reason can be given. It may not indeed be improbable, that the true origin of this new-created want is, that the greater part of the present race, from the defect of a religious education, or from subsequent dissipation, which is found to obliterate all serious ideas, have no relish for the proper and natural methods of spending our time on a Sunday, the performance of religious duties, and the exertions of benevolence.

No. XXI. *On the Complaints of Men of Learning.*

An impartial observer will be obliged to confess, that if the real evils of men of genius and learning be not greater than those of others, yet the sense of them is commonly more acute. The same delicacy of feeling, which renders them particularly susceptible of intellectual beauty, makes them feel more sensibly the common distresses of human life.

Men of genius and learning are, for the most part, in a state of intense thought: while they, who are engaged in less refined pursuits, are frequently in a state of mental insensibility; and if happiness is only in the mind, every little accident must disturb his repose who is always in meditation. The string which is constantly kept in a state of tension will vibrate on the slightest impulse.

The pleasures of men of literature, are those which arise from the contemplation of greatness, novelty, and beauty; pleasures of the purest and most exalted nature. Perhaps, no state is more truly happy

than that of a man of genius, at the time he is closely engaged in surveying either of these three sources of imaginative enjoyment; but the very purity and excellence of these pleasures are ultimately the occasion of misery to their votaries. Our present condition will not permit merely mental gratifications to engross our whole care and attention; and when the mind reverts from its ideal bliss to the occupations which its union with a body necessarily enjoins, the transition from supreme delight to insipidity and vexation, becomes the occasion of a degree of misery more than proportionate to the degree of lost happiness.

Perfection is ever the object of genius; but perfection is not to be found in human affairs. Genius is, therefore, disgusted with the impossibility of obtaining that which is constantly in its view. This it suffers in the recesses of study: but upon entrance into the transactions and employments of busy life, the perfection which it aims at is much more rarely visible. Objects which, to the common mind, are pleasing or indifferent, appear to the mind of genius deformed and disgusting; because they fall short of that image of perfection, formed in the fancy, to which, as a standard, every thing is usually referred and compared. Thus acuteness of discernment serves to discover concealed blemishes, as the microscope sees a spot where the naked eye beheld nothing but beauty.

The man of study is generally engaged in serious employments. He lives (σπουδαιως, as the Greeks call it) constantly attentive to some end. The rest of the world devote the greatest share of their time to ease, merriment, and diversion. The man of severe study is sometimes drawn from his closet, in compliance with custom, or solicited by importunity, to partake of the ordinary amusements of common

life. He goes with reluctance and timidity; for perhaps he cannot shine in company, and he looks upon every avocation as an obstacle to the accomplishment of his chief end and wishes. He returns with chagrin, because, in the hour of convivial gaiety or of festival levity, he has found his merits pass unnoticed, and his authority treated with neglect.

The several causes which have been thus far assigned for the querulous disposition of literary men, cannot reflect on them any disgrace: but there are others equally probable, and more dishonourable.

They who are constantly endeavouring to add to their attainments, mean at the same time to increase their value and acquire reputation. Every step of progressive advancement fills the breast of the proficient with a higher opinion of his own merit, and confirms his consciousness of self-dignity. But the world is not privy to every new acquisition which the student makes in his closet. He therefore increases his exactions of respect, before his companions are sensible of an increase of merit. From disappointed pride, therefore, the cultivator of knowledge derives no inconsiderable part of his uneasiness.

Every end that is worth pursuit, has a great number of pursuers. Competitors naturally look upon each other as enemies, mutually opposing their several wishes. This jealousy is no where to be found more frequent, or more violent, than among the pursuers of literary honours. The student is therefore often envious, and, than Envy, as the satirist remarks, no Sicilian tyrant ever invented a greater torture.

Perhaps, after all, that lowness of spirits which a sedentary life, and an unremitted attention produce, may give rise to complaints founded only in an hypochondriac imagination.

Whether or not these are the true causes of the

complaints and wretchedness of the learned, it is not very material to determine. Certain it is, that they who are furnished with the means of the greatest happiness, are frequently the most miserable. By attending to great things, they neglect those which appear little, but on which our happiness greatly depends.

No. XXII. *Strictures on Modern Ethics.*

THE neglect of the classics, and of the ancient moral philosophers, in modern education, tends no less to injure virtue, and every valuable and lovely disposition of the heart, than to corrupt taste, and degrade dignity.

It is true indeed, that the present times, compared with the ancient, are properly the old age of the world. And if we reason from analogy, we must conclude that they surpass, in the knowledge of external nature, the ages which have preceded. Accordingly we find in all those things, a skill in which necessarily depends on long experience and extensive observation, that the moderns possess an indisputable superiority. In useful science, and in natural philosophy, the ancients fall so short, as not to bear the comparison. Aristotle and Pliny committed their dreams to writing, instead of an authentic natural history, and a rational system of physics. No one can justly question their ingenuity, but they wanted authentic matter for its exertion. They were contented with reports, not only concerning subjects which they had no opportunity of examining, but concerning those which fell under their

notice. They induced general remarks from too small a number of particulars. Pliny indeed seems to have written a physical romance, with an intention to entertain, rather than to discover and communicate severe truths. The more marvellous his representation, the better it answered his purpose, and it was not very likely to be strictly canvassed in an age when the true spirit of philosophical inquiry was totally unknown.

The ancients had not those instruments of science, the air-pump, the telescope, and the microscope. And among their principal obstructions, is to be numbered, the want of knowing the futility of hypothesis, when unsupported by experiment. While fancy was allowed to amuse herself in framing systems of her own, reason sunk in repose, and declined the painful task of close examination. The sincerest admirer of the ancients will therefore give up their pretensions to scientific excellence; and though he will recommend the study of Pliny as a classic who writes agreeably, yet will he advise the votary of science to substitute, in the place of him and of all the ancient naturalists, the works of Boyle, of Newton, of Buffon, and of the numerous writers in the Philosophical Transactions.

But for their defects in natural, the ancients compensate by their excellence in moral, philosophy. Mechanical instruments were not wanted to make observations on human nature. Natural sagacity, improved by generous education, and exercised in a civilized community, was enabled to make just conclusions concerning the powers, the passions, the duties, the vices of man as an individual, and as connected with others in his domestic, social, and civil relations. But the knowledge of nature and of her operations, compared with the knowledge of ourselves and of our duty, is of small consequence.

It is justly remarked, that our English divines are the best moralists with respect to matter, whom the world ever produced. And for this it is easy to account. They established their precepts on the firm basis of revealed religion, and not on the sandy foundation of human systems. But the misfortune is, that they are little attended to by those who stand most in need of reformation. The libertine, the man of the world, the polite modern philosopher, has been taught to associate the idea of dulness to a sermon, and would fear the imputation of prejudice, if he were to profess a belief of received religions, and conform his actions to their precepts. His creed is formed from the opinions of Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Hume, and many others, who have perverted taste, genius, and learning, to the purpose of supporting unlimited libertinism.

It is not likely, that he who is taught to look upon himself only as an animal, furnished indeed with a superior degree of sagacity, but, like his fellow-brutes, doomed to perish for ever at death, should possess that elevation of sentiment which Christianity inspires, and which is necessary to constitute the great man in the private as well as in the public scenes of life. His principles necessarily lead him to assimilate with those animals, among whom he is ambitious of being numbered. The enjoyments of sense will be, in his idea, the chief good; and that severe virtue, which can alone render him serviceable to the great community of mankind, or distinguish him honourably in the society of which he is a member, he will esteem the characteristic of visionary enthusiasts, who know not the nature of man, and the end of his existence.

But ancient philosophy teaches to respect humanity. To have that reverence for one's self, which arises from a just sense of the superior nature and

endowments of a human creature, was a precept of the earliest philosophers, and was thought to be the best security for a generous and virtuous conduct. It is not pride; for pride consists in arrogating merits to which it has no claim: but it is an adequate idea of our own dignity in the scale of being, when compared with the brutes, and a resolution to support it. Yet how should he think or act like the lord of the Creation, who is taught by the insinuations of modern philosophers, that man is to be classed in the same species with the ape and the monkey?

Among the profligate, indeed, and the uninstructed, we see humanity sadly degenerated. Attentive only to the solicitations of the senses, and obedient to every passion, the vulgar, both of the higher and the lower ranks, lead a life truly and merely animal. If, however, it be wisdom to live according to nature and the newly-divulged opinion, that man is no more by nature than a sagacious brute, be true, then are those whom we call the basest and most worthless of mankind the patterns of imitation, and the only philosophers. Education, on these principles, is no longer necessary. The passions are competent guides, and the more violent they are, the more unambiguous their directions. Let our schools be shut up, for why should we be at the pains to study, while true wisdom and virtue are to be learned at an easy rate, of our brother-beasts in the stable and the dog-kennel?

It has been the aim of the earlier Poets, Legislators, Sages, and Reformers, to advance human nature from its primeval rudeness, to all the perfection of which it is capable in a state of civilization. Men in general have willingly followed their dictates, and have found progressive happiness in progressive improvement. It was reserved for the present age of paradox, to reconcile

the idea of advancement with retrograde motion, of improving human life, by restoring habits, principles, and weaknesses, long exploded and overcome. It is well known, that several celebrated writers have inferred the absurdity of many, not only innocent, but laudable and beneficial notions and practices, from their being unknown, or different from those established in savage nations in the state of nature. In order to imbibe ideas of decency and moral fitness, they have obliquely referred us to the groves of Otaheite. That such writers should have appeared is wonderful; but it is still more so, that they should have found numerous readers and admirers. And it is a striking event in the history of mankind, that, after the efforts of several thousand years in promoting civilization, many were found desirous of returning to the wretched practices of savage life.

But even he who is taught to revere the wisdom of the naked Indian, and to despise the improvement of his own times and nation, is more likely to think and act with dignity, than the man who believes himself a machine. Such an one, to be consistent, must renounce the idea of the soul's supremacy over the actions of the body, and must resign himself to the impulse of that blood, of which alone he believes himself to consist. As an engine he will yield to every motion without resistance; for the perfection of the machine depends on its moving with the least possible friction or impediment. The mistake of him who looks on himself in this light, is almost as absurd as that of the hypochondriac visionary, who, in the temporary madness of his reverie, imagines himself transformed into inanimate matter.

The dark and disputatious style and manner in which the modern philosopher vents his sceptical

ideas, though it may give his disciples a turn for metaphysics, and teach them to involve a dispute in perplexity, has very little tendency to improve the understanding, to give a clearness of conception, or to promote a frank and manly disposition.

It is indeed with a pleasure equal to that of turning from a putrifying carcase, to behold the living body in a state of youth and beauty, that one leaves the poor inventions of the vain sceptic, and the gloomy metaphysician, to recollect the names and opinions of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero. From these I learn, what is confirmed by Christianity, that I have a soul within me, which shall survive its perishable habitation. These inform me, that human nature approaches to the divine; that virtue will make me happy in myself, and recommend me to the favour of that Being who constantly superintends the world he first created.

The philosophy of the moderns excludes all religion. Infidelity is its basis. But can there be a truly great man without religion? There may be a cunning, a witty, an audacious man; but there cannot be a great man without religion. Nor will he become a good senator, a good judge, a good commander, or fill the lower departments of civil and social life with integrity and honour, who disregards an oath, and from principle seeks only self-inserest and private gratification.

The man of the world, it is true, will often discharge the duties of his station with regular propriety. A regard for fame, a desire to enlarge and to preserve connexions, will keep him within the bounds of apparent rectitude. But, where deviation can be concealed, where compliance with temptation is compatible with safety, what shall restrain him? Nothing in the moral system of a philosophical unbeliever.

No. XXIII. *On the Style of History.*

THE end of oratory is to persuade, of poetry to please, and of history to instruct by the recital of true events. The style of each must be adapted to produce the intended purpose, not only of the writer of any particular oration, poem, or history, but of oratory, poetry, and history in general. Any composition, arrogating either of these names, but assuming ornaments foreign to its nature, is faulty. It may be popular from fashion, personal influence, and caprice, but it will not descend to posterity; because it is inconsistent with those rules, which have been long universally established, and which, for this reason have been long and universally established, because they were found agreeable to the constitution of the human mind, and best fitted to produce on it a powerful and genuine effect.

The diction of oratory should be nervous, pointed, impetuous, and adorned with every embellishment which rhetoric has invented. Poetry admits a style made up of graces. Every ornament, natural and artificial, may find a place in it. But it is not so with history: for the purpose of history is truth, and truth requires no more than to be fairly, openly, and unaffectedly exhibited. If then the embellishments appropriated to poetry and eloquence are borrowed by the historian, though his work may delight a vitiated taste, he must not be recommended as a model. History should indeed possess a dignity; but it should arise, like the majestic dignity of Grecian architecture, from the simplicity of its ornaments.

No good rule is unsupported by a reason. Now

the reason why history admits not a profusion of embellishment is, that such embellishment cannot be applied without an obvious appearance of art; but the appearance of art tends to call in question the historian's veracity, his primary and indispensable excellence. The mind is naturally suspicious, and, where it finds art in one instance, it will expect that it exists in another, and is not seen, only because it is concealed with more subtilty.

Livy and Tacitus, excellent as they are in general, have been convicted of deviating into poetry. There are many passages in both of them, which, if you attend to the accentual and not to the syllabic quantity, may be scanned like hexameter verses. The language and thoughts in Livy's descriptions are often highly poetical; as, to mention, for instance, one particular passage, is the celebrated account of the combats of the Horatii and Curiatii. But this must be said in the defence of both, that they are transported by the warmth of their minds, when they are describing a very interesting transaction, and that, for the most part, their narrative proceeds with all the dignity and simplicity of a correct taste. Their deviations into poetry, though not strictly defensible, yet, as they appear to be the genuine effects of their feelings excited by extraordinary occasions, are really not displeasing. We can bear a few occasional flashes; but our eyes would turn away with pain from a long and continued glare. Yet names must not overpower the authority of reason and just criticism; and, if Herodotus, or Livy, or Tacitus, have admitted ornaments inconsistent either in their nature and number with an unaffected simplicity, they are so far faulty.

The assertion, that unaffected simplicity is the most beautiful grace of the historical style, and that

the diction should not be such, either in the construction or selection of words, as to allure the attention of the reader from the facts to the words, from the hero to the writer, though it is perfectly consistent with my own opinion, does not rely for support on my judgment alone, but is fully confirmed by the best judges of antiquity, Aristotle, Demetrius Phalereus, Lucian, and Cicero. I have read several passages of their writings, which I forbear to quote, because it was agreed in projecting this edition, not to insert any passages in languages which might not be understood by the general reader.

With these ideas then in our minds, we will take a view of history, as it appears at present in the hands of recent historians, who have boldly claimed and received the palm.

It is generally agreed among learned critics, that some of the most popular historians of France have violated the gravity and dignity of the historic page, by perpetual attempts to be witty. When the reader takes up the history of a celebrated age and a renowned king, his mind is in a tone to admit elevated ideas, and such as are consistent with so noble and majestic a subject. And, though his imagination may be a little diverted, his taste and judgment are offended at finding, in the place of manly reflections, every paragraph terminating with the pert witticism of an epigram. It is evident, that such works may afford pleasure, because many have been pleased with them; but it is equally certain, that the pleasure is not such as results from legitimate history. The writer evidently labours to display himself and his own ingenuity; but it is one great secret in the art of writing, that the writer should keep himself out of sight, and cause the ideas, which he means to convey, of whatever kind they may be, to engross

the reader's attention. They cannot indeed otherwise produce their proper effect. If there are any readers, who choose to have the writers present to their view, rather than the matter on which he writes, they may be said to resemble those spectators who go to the theatre rather to see and hear a favourite actor, than to attend to the persons of the drama. It is not Shakspeare's Hamlet or Lear whom they admire, but some name which stands in rubric characters on the walls and in the play-bills.

But let us confine our present remarks to the historical taste, which has of late prevailed in our own country. It is certainly better than the French taste; but, if we may judge by the reception of one or two works out of several, it is by no means perfect. The historian of Charles the Fifth possesses so many excellencies, that it is almost sacrilegious to detract from his merit. But no writer is perfect; and I doubt not, from the opinion I entertain of his taste and candour, that he will confess when the ardour of composition is abated, that his style has deviated from the historical to the declamatory. He relates the councils as well as the wars of nations with all the vehemence of a Demosthenes, and the rapid eloquence of a Ciceronian Philippic. The style is glowing and animated in a high degree; but does nature dictate, that a long and diffuse dissertation on such subjects as the feudal state, or on others equally dispassionate in themselves, should be treated in a style which would become an orator in the act of rouzing his sluggish countrymen to repel an invader? I will not enter into an inquiry, whether such long dissertations legitimately belong to history or to another species of composition. I believe they might more properly be classed under the name of Political Dissertations. They find no place in the purer models of antiquity; and the reader has certainly a right to complain, when they

occupy a disproportionate part of a work, and appear in the place of facts, on which he might make his own reflections. But the fire and *vis vivida*, or the life and the spirit which is diffused over this respectable writer's page, induces us to forget awhile the rules prescribed by the frigidity of criticism. What though he seems to have made Demosthenes his model, instead of Livy or Herodotus, yet surely, what bears any resemblance to the spirit of that noble Athenian, cannot fail to delight and improve. And it ought to be remembered, to the honour of this writer, that he has not made his history the vehicle of any opinions destructive of the civil or religious systems of his country.

It would be happy, if this praise could be extended to all our historians; but there has appeared a history, the faults of whose style should have passed unnoticed, if the matter had been less reprehensible. The style displays not the honest warmth of a Robertson, but appears with an air of soft and subtle insinuation, better adapted to introduce a lurking poison. The words are well chosen; but the collocation of them is feeble and effeminate, though painfully elaborate and affected. There is scarcely a sentence throughout the work without an idle epithet, which, while it loads and wearies the ear, adds little to the meaning, and less to the force of the period. There is a disgusting affectation of fastidious delicacy. There is also a tedious sameness in the style, which renders the reading a toil, and which will gradually consign the work to its peaceful shelf, as soon as the fashionable world shall have found another idol; which, indeed, cannot be a distant event, since variety is essential to its enjoyments; and great books, though written by a man of fashion, an Infidel, and a Lord of the Admiralty, are still great evils.

The very weak, insolent, and passionate manner,

in which this writer answered one of his opponents, leaves his readers to conclude, that his philosophy has more in it of ostentation than reality. The whole work, indeed, exhibits marks of excessive vanity and conceit. But, such as it is, the learning and the labour displayed in it should have secured my respect, had it not insolently and wickedly laboured to exterminate the last remains of morality and religion from my country. It furnishes arguments for the ignorant and vicious in their disputing assemblies, and thus indirectly tends to sap the foundations of human happiness and of civil government. For, though the more learned and the better part of the community despise the weak and vain and wicked attempt, yet it must be remembered, that the majority consists of the foolish and the profligate.

It was a mean subterfuge to make history the oblique channel of theological infidelity. An ingenuous young man takes up the book, from the laudable motive of improving his mind with historical knowledge. But, as he reads, he finds himself corrupted, and is cheated into irreligion and libertinism. The author, like others of his class, meant little more than to acquire distinction by alarming mankind by the attack of what they have been taught to hold dear and sacred. But though vanity is indisputably the motive, the consequences are no less malignant than if the work had originated in malice.

How much better had he consulted his own comfort in the evil day, on the bed of sickness, and at the hour of death: had he adopted the humility of the Christian, and aimed at no other distinction than the esteem and the applause of the worthy! But such is the vanity of man's heart, that he is willing to resign, for the sake of an imaginary life of fame, all hopes of a real and happy immortality.

No. XXIV. *On the Manner of Writing Voyages and Travels.*

It is observed by those decisive critics, the booksellers, who judge of the merit of a book by the criterion of its sale, that few books have succeeded better of late than voyages and travels. Now, as that which succeeds is pursued with ardour, every superficial stripling, who takes a trip, takes also notes as he goes along; and, when he returns, puts them into a bookseller's hands to be furbished up, and swelled to a marketable size; and then out skips a brace of volumes. This, it must be confessed, is an ingenious method of making a journey pay its own expenses.

It is not uncommon for Criticism to employ herself in pointing out the end or purpose of any species of writings or writers; as, for instance, the end of poetry, which is to please; of history, which is to instruct; and so of the rest. Now, without any great theoretical skill, and without perusing a page of Aristotle, it is very clear, that the end of the greater part of writings and writers is the copy-money. What will sell, is often the first object; not what is conformable to the eternal laws of truth and propriety, nor what will serve the essential interests of society.

To please, is certainly a very valuable end. He who pleases innocently has performed his task well; but here, it seems, lies the difficulty. In order to please, it is found necessary, through the dearth of genius, to introduce licentious ideas, and to strike at some of the outworks of religion and morality.

The Voyages to the South Seas are, indeed, in their design, of a kind very superior to those which I mean to censure. They do honour to the reign in which they were undertaken. They exhibit human nature in new lights, and furnish abundant matter for philosophical reflection. They are to the curious mind of man, most delightfully entertaining; but the first writer of them fell into a most lamentable error. Instead of relating the events, and leaving the reader to comment on them, he not only makes the comments himself, but makes such comments as tend to invalidate some of the most comfortable parts of the creed of his countrymen. Every reader was astonished when he found a Hawkesworth, who had supported virtue and religion with such peculiar energy of diction and of sentiment, *adventuring* at last to call in question a particular Providence. It is very certain, that we might have been informed of some remarkable features in the Otaheitean character, if the indelicate and corrupting representations had been totally omitted. But who can wonder at what was written, when a Sandwich was the patron?

Who has read the exquisite touches of nature and sensibility in Sterne's Sentimental Journey, without feeling his nerves vibrate, with every tender emotion! Sterne has shown what a true simplicity of style, and a faithful adherence to nature, are able to effect. I wish it were possible to give him the praise of morality as well as of genius; but the poison he conveys is subtle, and the more dangerous as it is palatable. I believe no young mind ever perused his books without finding those passions roused and inflamed, which, after all that the novelist can advance in their favour, are the copious sources of all human misery. Many a connection, begun with the fine sentimentality which Sterne

has recommended and increased, has terminated in disease, infamy, want, madness, suicide, and a gibbet. Every writer, whatever may be his life, should take the side of virtue in his public writings, and endeavour to restrain the irregularity of those affections, which, under every restraint, are still capable of producing more evil than any other cause throughout the whole system of human affairs. It is our reason which wants all the aids which art can bestow. Our passions, without the stimulus of licentious or indulgent principles, will have strength sufficient to produce all that nature meant, and much more than she meant they should produce.

Much of Sterne's journey is certainly founded on fiction; but it has nevertheless afforded a model to those, who have pretended to relate nothing but the truth. His sentimental and excessive sensibility was found so engaging, that most of the subsequent authors of travels have been induced to interweave into the body of their work an amorous episode. We have been made acquainted with the *embonpoint* of a servant at an inn, or rather at a hedge alehouse, and the parting pangs of the smitten traveller and his Dulcinea del Toboso, have been recorded in London for our edification. The authors might possibly have been involved in a low or criminal amour, or have paid attention to a Madame de Blot, or a Madame d'Ursay; but why inform their readers of their gallantry, unless they mean to draw attention by inflaming those combustible passions, which, in youthful hearts, catch fire, like tinder, at a spark? The book however will be pretty sure to sell, and therefore will be encouraged by those modern Mæcenas's, the booksellers and the circulating librarians.

Nothing is more easy than to display that kind of wit, which consists in obscenity and in blasphemy.

He cannot fail to attract notice, who attacks opinions which are held sacred; and it was not difficult for him, who panted for distinction only, to obtain it by burning the temple of Diana.

A few arrows have therefore been obliquely thrown, by the travellers of late years, on the Christian religion. The mask is the ridicule of popery; but the mask is transparent. All religion is indirectly stigmatised as weak superstition. Scriptural phrases are used with wanton profaneness in some of our most popular travels, and those levities and vices gently palliated, which are forbidden by the sacred laws, and by the British laws, and which British virtue has not yet generally admitted.

I really cannot help thinking, that voyages and travels require fewer of these or of any arts to render them entertaining than any other writings. Every man of sense and observation must see, as he passes through a foreign country, in every town and village into which he enters, some characteristic and singular circumstances, which cannot fail to please in the recital. Truth only wants to be represented to render the narrative alluring. If any thing occurs injurious to the morals or the political principles of one's own country, it ought to be either totally suppressed, or represented with concomitant censure. I have observed one favourite topic of the conversation as well as writing of many travellers: it is the charming licentiousness of a foreign sabbath. They think their country much in the dark in many particulars; but the prohibition of public diversions on a Sunday, they consider as past all indurance, as impolitic, and as a relic of British barbarism.

With respect to the contents of some books of travels, which have been well received, I cannot help thinking it a species of literary fraud, when

their authors fill them with long historical accounts, which every man might have collected at his own fire-side, as well as at Venice or at Naples. And I own I was once greatly cheated in finding a very tedious treatise on the consumption in a book of travels, where the title-page led me to expect a large fund of information on foreign subjects only.

Travellers have often been censured for enumerating what are called trifling occurrences. I think the censure is unjust. Trifling occurrences are often very amusing; but, if they were only amusing, and took up the room of other valuable matter, the censure might be well founded: but they lead to very important speculations. They suggest hints; and hints, to a fertile mind, are more acceptable than formal discourses; evidently because they lead the mind to exert its own activity. I own I am pleased when the traveller speaks in the first person, and conducts us from inn to inn, and town to town, with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. Every thing which concerns him interests us. We feel as he did in all his inconveniences and distresses, and derive, from the whole account of small particulars, as well as great, a very valuable share and species of experience.

The style of voyages and travels should be plain, simple, perspicuous, and unaffected. I think they seldom appear to great advantage, but when written in the words of the traveller or voyager, at the very time at which the circumstances which he relates occurred. They have then the native hue and complexion of truth, which seldom fails to attach the mind when clearly presented to its view. It was therefore a want of judgment and of justice, which caused the writing of Cook's Voyages to be given to Hawkesworth. Hawkesworth, it is reported, gained several thousand pounds by those materials,

which poor Cook had gone round the world to collect, and to relate which, as it afterwards appeared, he was well able. The Public, it is well remembered, received Cook's narrative much more favourably than the impertinent philosophy of Hawkesworth. When the information is so new and curious as to confine attention by the force of its own attractions, the mind must nauseate obtruded superfluity.

When voyages and travels are free from those faults which I have endeavoured to point out, they are capable of affording a very high and a very pure delight. I know of no books of amusement whatever so well adapted to young people. They satisfy that eager thirst after knowledge, which is found very strong at a boyish age, and they contain nothing which can corrupt their imaginations. They interest the mind as much as a novel; but, instead of rendering it effeminate and debauched, they make it usefully inquisitive, and furnish it with matter for reflection. Any book, which innocently delights the young mind, is, at the same time, much more improving than the best books written too profoundly or too seriously to be capable of attracting puerile attention. Anson's Voyage, for instance, will contribute more to call forth genius, and open the blossoms of the mind, than a dull didactic treatise of the most sagacious philosopher.

It is then an useful attempt to endeavour to clear a species of books, which are capable of doing much good, and affording much pleasure, from those evils, which a desire of popularity and of gain has often admitted into them. What is already published cannot indeed be recalled; but it may possibly be useful to suggest to succeeding writers in this department, that they will then only deserve the esteem and favour of their countrymen, when they

import from foreign lands the improvements which they find in them, and not when they introduce additions to that folly, vice, and irreligion, which abound in all countries without importation.

No. XXV. *On the Folly of being anxiously Curious to inquire what is said of us in our Absence.*

The best dispositions have usually the most sensibility. They have also that delicate regard for their reputations, which renders them sorely afflicted by the secret attacks of calumny and detraction. It is not an unreasonable and excessive self love, but a regard to that, without which a feeling mind cannot be happy, which renders many of us attentive to every word which is whispered of us in our absence.

From whatever motive it arises, an anxious curiosity to know the reports concerning ourselves is an infallible cause of misery. No virtue, no prudence, no caution, no generosity, can preserve us from misrepresentation. Our conduct must be misunderstood by weak intellects, and by those who see only a part of it, and hastily form a judgment of the whole. Every man of eminence has those who hate, who envy, and who affect to despise him. These will see his actions with a jaundiced eye, and will represent them to others in the colours in which themselves behold them. Many from carelessness, wantonness, or from a desire to entertain their company, are inclined to sport with respectable charac-

ters, and love to display their ingenuity by the invention of a scandalous tale. Nothing renders a man more agreeable in many companies than his possessing a fund of delicious anecdotes.

It is certain then, that from weakness, wantonness, or malevolence, a man, whose merit renders him a topic of conversation, will be misrepresented. He, who solicitously inquires what is said of him, will certainly hear something which will render him uneasy. His uneasiness will be increased, when he finds the poisoned arrow is shot in the dark; so that no abilities can repel the blow, and no innocence shield him from the assailant. Open attacks can be openly opposed; but the obscure insinuation proceeds without the possibility of resistance, like the worm, which penetrates the ship which has withstood the cannon. It is better, therefore, not to be too anxious to discover attacks, which, when discovered, add to our torment, but cannot be successfully resisted.

Indeed, we are apt to feel upon these occasions more acutely than we ought. We are told by a menial servant, or any other of our spies, that a person, whom we esteemed our friend, has spoken slightingly of us, made a joke upon us, or cast a severe reflection. Immediately on hearing the information, our blood boils within us. The indignity, we imagine, calls for our warmest resentment. Our friend is discarded, or suspected, as a treacherous wretch, unworthy of our love and confidence. This hasty ebullition of resentment is, I am ready to allow, very natural, and so are many other disorders of the passions. But, if we were to study the case, and acquire a right idea of the ways of men in society, we should find that in such instances our resentments may not only be too violent, but causeless; for we should recollect, that the

human mind, without absolutely relinquishing its principles, is often inclined, from the incidental influence of temper, of levity, of frolic, of intemperance, of precipitation, to speak inconsistently with them, and in a manner which the general tenour of our conduct uniformly contradicts. We should also recollect, that, besides this temporary variableness of the mind, the tongue is unruly, and, when the spirits or the passions are high, utters almost spontaneously what the mind, which ought to hold the bridle, would willingly keep in. If we reflect upon these things, and upon what has fallen under our experience, we may perhaps discover, that even real and worthy friends may speak unkindly of us, without any design to hurt us, or to violate the bonds of friendship. It is the infirmity of human nature which causes unintentional lapses in the duties of friendship, as well as in all other duties. By too eagerly listening to the casual censure whispered in a careless manner, we increase the evil, and cause a rupture where none was intended.

A man who is constantly solicitous to hear the reports which are raised of him, of his family, and of his conduct, depends, in a great measure, for happiness, upon his servants; upon those, whose ideas are narrow, and whose hearts too often ungrateful; who overhear a part of a conversation, and supply the rest, when they repeat it, by invention; who love to entertain the visitors and acquaintance with the private affairs of the house in which they live, and who are apt to blacken the characters of their supporters and protectors, in revenge for a reprimand, or from the natural malignity of a bad heart. The tongue, said Juvenal, is the worst part of a bad servant. But the master of a family, who is always endeavouring to collect what is uttered by his humble friends, as servants have been called, will

find himself subject to perpetual mortification. And it is a circumstance which renders his solicitude peculiarly unwise, that, after all the idle stories which their garrulity or resentment may lead them to propagate, they may be as good servants as any others he might engage in their room, or as human nature, in its uncultivated state, is found in general to afford. When their foolish words are uttered, they vanish into air; and the servants return to their duties, and probably will serve their masters as usefully and as faithfully as if nothing had been said in their angry or unthinking moments. So little meaning and weight are there in the words of the weak and the passionate, and so inconsistent with wisdom to listen to that tale, which, while it sinks into the mind of him who hears that he is the subject of it, passes over the minds of others, as the shadow over the earth; or, supposing it to be noticed, remembered, and even capable of doing him an injury, he can only make it more mischievous by paying attention to it, and by giving it an importance not its own.

It will conduce, in a peculiar manner, to the peace of all persons who superintend large families, or large numbers of assistants, or of subordinate classes; such as the governors of schools and colleges, the generals of armies, the employers of manufacturers, and many others in situations somewhat similar; if they can habituate themselves to disregard those calumnies, which will certainly be poured upon them, though they should not merit ill-treatment. Their hearts will indeed often be wrung with grief, if they are sensible of every ill-natured whisper which makes its way, like the worm in the earth, and may at last corrode the worthiest bosom, if the breast-plate of reason is not previously applied. Whoever has many individuals under his

direction, is exposed to the malice of them all; and, as dispositions and tempers are often diametrically opposite, he can scarely fail to offend as many as he pleases: for the very conduct which pleases one set will give offence to the other. Friends, as well as enemies, are liable to ill-humour and caprice; and every malignant remark is as naturally levelled at the superintendant as the musquet at the target. A man, who has many persons under him, must not only not go in search of the darts which are thrown at him, but, even when he cannot avoid seeing them, must let them waste their force unregarded. If he does not adopt this conduct, his life will be a perpetual torment, and may possibly terminate in that which is the frequent death of good men, a broken heart.

Perhaps we might be less inclined to inquire what is said of us in our absence, and less affected with it when discovered, if we considered how freely we ourselves are apt to speak even of those we love. We censure and we ridicule others, in the gaiety and thoughtlessness of conversation, and what we have said makes so little impression upon ourselves that we forget it; and, in the next hour, probably speak with honour of the same persons, and then, and on all occasions, would be ready to serve them. Beware of the man, says Horace, who defends not his absent friend when he is blamed by others, and who blames him himself. But such is his nature, that, in a fit of levity, a man will speak of another, and hear him spoken of, in such terms as, in his serious moments, he would resent. Let any man ask himself, whether he has not often said such things of others, without meaning to injure them, or ever thinking seriously of what he was saying, as if he were to hear that they were said of himself, in any manner whatever, he would not warmly

retaliate? Let him then endeavour to see things in the same light, when he finds he has been carelessly censured, in which he saw them when he carelessly censured others. Indeed, it must be allowed, that a man of sensibility and honour cannot take too much pains to vindicate his character from any open and direct calumny; but the same spirit, which leads him to that manly conduct, will induce him to leave the dirty dealers in scandal to themselves, and to their mean occupations.

Though a delicate regard for character is virtuous and rational, yet it is really true, that we all estimate our own value among others much higher than it is estimated by them. What is said of us seldom sinks so deeply in their minds as, from a vain idea of our own importance, we are apt to imagine. We are occasionally talked of, it may be, in the course of common conversation, and serve for topics together with the weather, the wind, and the news; but he who thinks that he is the constant object of his neighbour's accurate and close inspection, is ignorant of human nature. Man's chief object of attention is himself; and though, to fill an idle hour, he may talk of others, it is carelessly and indifferently; and, whether he speaks in praise or dispraise, he often means neither to serve nor injure. From supposing ourselves of more consequence with others than we are, we suspect, that they are conversing about us when they really think not of us; and, when they are known by us to have spoken unkindly or contemptuously, we immediately consider them as declared enemies. Our suspicions are awakened when led to entertain bad opinions of mankind, and our good-humour is soured for ever. "But good-humour," says an elegant writer, "is "the salt which gives a seasoning to the feast of "life; and which, if it be wanting, renders the feast

" incomplete. Many causes contribute to impair " this amiable quality; but nothing, perhaps, more " than bad opinions of mankind." To avoid bad opinions of mankind, much of their ill deeds, and ill sayings, must be attributed to thoughtlessness, and not only to malignity; we must not always be on the watch to hear what is said against us in an unguarded hour; we must be humble, and consider, whether we do not treat others just as we complain of being treated by them; and, while we complain of mankind, whether ourselves, and the dispositions which we entertain, do not furnish some of the justest causes of the complaint. Upon the whole, let it be our first object to do our duty, and not to be very anxious about any censure but that of conscience.

Let the weak and the ill-natured enjoy the poor pleasure of whispering calumny and detraction, and let the man of sense and spirit display the wisdom and dignity of disregarding them. The dog bays the moon, but the moon still shines on in all its beautiful serenity and lustre, and moves in its orbit with undisturbed regularity.

The scriptures, among all their other recommendations, abound with passages which finely portray the human heart. I will cite one passage, which is very apposite to the subject of this paper: " Take " no heed to all words that are spoken, lest thou " hear thy servant curse thee. For oftentimes also, " thine own heart knoweth, that thou thyself likewise " hast cursed others."

No. XXVI. *On the Efficacy of Moral Instruction.*

It seems to be tacitly agreed among men of the world, that, though books of moral instruction may afford pleasure to the young, or to those who love books, as a connoisseur loves a picture, or a virtuoso his medals, yet they are really of little utility in the actual conduct of life. They assert, that a few practical and artful maxims, collected from an actual intercourse with the living world, will be more serviceable than all the wisdom of the moral philosopher.

It is very certain, that a knowledge of the world, as it is called, will teach such a kind of wisdom as will tend to advance one's interest, and procure connexions; but still I must maintain, that in itself, and uncontrolled by moral principles, it is a despicable kind of wisdom; for it is always incompatible with the ingenuousness of a good mind. It inculcates a submission to many meannesses. It renders life a continued series of deceit; and, indeed, so far from esteeming such wisdom superior to that which we learn in books, I cannot help thinking it a more refined, and consequently a more execrable species of knavery.

The morality of books is therefore necessary to give this subordinate wisdom, value, and dignity. It enlarges the views, and induces us not to esteem our interest at a higher rate than our conscience and our independence. It enables us to join to the alluring qualities of an insinuating address, the respectable ones of a manly spirit and unshaken integrity. He who sets out in life with a mind untinctured with the morality of books, though he may

probably attain success, can neither deserve it, nor adorn it, nor enjoy it. He who sets out in life with moral principles deeply fixed in his heart, though a deceiving and deceived world should neglect him, will find in his heart a source of joy, which the world, with all its riches and honours, cannot bestow.

But there is another objection raised against the efficacy of the moral instruction of books. The moralist is accused of requiring too much, and of prescribing rules and suggesting ideas of excellence, at which human creatures can never arrive. With all his pretended knowledge of the heart of man, he is said to be, in general, quite ignorant of it, and to derive all his conceptions from beings who have not yet fallen. To learn such wisdom as will be really useful, we must shut those books where pictures are exhibited, whose originals are not to be found in this sublunary sphere. The church, the porch, the Lyceum, and the academy, furnish only imaginary notions. If you would attain realities, you are obliquely referred to the brothel, the gaming table, and to all the haunts of avarice, fraud, and vicious pleasure. These, say they, are the schools in which man is described as he really exists; and in these the knowing part of mankind seek and find that wisdom, which is vainly sought by fools in the church or in the library.

It is true, that books do indeed represent things better than they are; but it is as true, that, in doing so, they do what they ought. It is their praise, and not their shame. They endeavour to raise human nature, and they succeed in the attempt; for, however bad the world may be, the extremes of wickedness are to be found among those who do not read, not among those who have been educated in the doctrines contained in the moral philosophers; and

whatever exalted excellence occurs in the world, is produced by those whose minds have been cultivated by moral instruction.

If things were to be described by the moralist merely as they are; if only such precepts were to be given by him, as tend to teach the young mind how to deceive, and to practise those vices which abound in the world, public degeneracy and corruption would certainly increase to a degree which can hardly be conceived. Wretched indeed is man without the assistance of a moral guide, and wretched, and even infernal would be the state of society, if books were not continually employed in checking our precipitate course to moral degeneracy. We can hardly imagine what an appearance society would assume, if books were precluded; because we can never experience any thing like it in these ages, when scarcely an individual arrives at maturity without receiving some instruction, oral or written, derived from books.

I have myself heard it objected to the great Addison by men of the world, that they could not approve his writings, because, as they said, he labours to render man what he never can be. I will take upon me to assert, that, notwithstanding this charge, more good has been done to the English nation by the lucubrations of Addison, than by the active labours of any one individual, however high his station and powerful his influence. The Spectators are at this time every where read through the British empire, and much of the learning and the good qualities, which have appeared among us since their publication, has been derived from them. No books are more popular, from the highest to the lowest orders; and that the British nation is not sunk to the level of its neighbours, is to be, in great measure, attributed to a book of moral instruction, in

which things are represented better than they are, and the comparative dignity of human nature nobly vindicated.

It is from the erroneous idea, that very little advantage in the conduct of life is to be derived from books of moral instruction; that our English sermons, which abound in the best morality, enforced in the most powerful manner, are almost universally neglected. They are bought by young divines for the use of the pulpit; but they are little read in the closet. An unconcerned spectator would be led to suspect, that most men were insincere, and that there subsisted a tacit agreement between them to deceive and be deceived. For they, who attend to and applaud a sermon as it is pronounced by the preacher from the pulpit, would blush to be found in their retirements with a volume of sermons in their hands. If they really believed the matter of sermons, it is of so very interesting a nature, that they must be tempted to read them with avidity; but the same unfortunate idea prevails, that though the moral discourse may serve in its proper place to amuse an audience, it is not sufficiently efficacious to be able to influence the conduct of life. It is considered as a matter of form, which very good sort of people may attend to from motives of decency, and then return to their former conduct unaltered and unimproved.

The end which I have chiefly in view, in submitting these remarks is, not only to recommend an attention to books and instructive discourses, but to produce, if possible, an alteration in the scope and object of that attention. I wish readers to take up a book with a desire to receive from it moral instruction, and not merely literary entertainment. Every one of us, whatever are our improvements,

is liable to relax in his principles, unless they are frequently renewed and strengthened by admonition. Fortunately for us, books of morality abound; and places, where instruction is given in the most solemn manner, and under the most awful sanctions, are almost daily opened for our reception. But, alas! how few of us purchase and peruse a book with a sincere desire to be rendered better men; and how many attend to the preacher solely to gratify our curiosity, and derive amusement! Bad indeed must be the book and the sermon, from which any man may not, if he will, receive some hint, which, when seriously reflected on, would lead to improvement. But our want of humility, and our idea that subjects, which concern our worldly interest and pleasure, are the only subjects worthy the care of a man of sense, render all which the wisest men have collected for our guidance utterly abortive.

What are the books which men in the exercise of power, and men of business, chiefly regard? Only such as have a tendency to facilitate the mechanical parts of their several employments: poor and mean objects in comparison with the sublimity of objects moral and religious. Yet all others they are too apt to consider as trifling and nonsensical, serving indeed to fill up the time of those who have nothing else to do, but not worth the notice of the man of sense and of the world. From such modes of thinking originate narrowness, illiberality, and ignorance, the fruitful parents of every vice which can render their possessor miserable, and be injurious to society.

No. XXVII. *On Modern Criticism.*

I CANNOT help thinking, that the effect which a literary work is found to produce, is the best criterion of its merit; and that sentiment or feeling, after all that has been urged by theoretical critics, is the ultimate and infallible touchstone to appreciate with precision the works of taste and genius. Theoretical criticism constitutes indeed a very ingenious species of writing; but, before I can be really pleased with a poem or a piece of oratory, I must feel its excellence. I may be convinced of the merit of a work by a series of abstruse and metaphysical argumentation, and yet, on reading it, find myself greatly disappointed. There is indeed, in all works of true taste and genius, something of that elevated nature, which cannot be pointed out by verbal description, and which can only be perceived by the vibrations it produces on the nervous system.

The inference I mean to draw from this truth is, that they who have enjoyed the benefits of a good education, and improved their parts which were naturally good, may deserve the praise of good critics, when they pronounce on a work, that it is good or bad, or make any particular remarks on its beauties and deformities, according to their feelings, even though they should not be able or inclined to give such subtle reasons for their judgment as have lately appeared in some very ingenious writings of this age.

Those readers will not deem this subject unnecessary, who are informed, that even Mr. Addison has been refused, in the present age, the name and the

praise of a critic. "It must not be dissembled," says Dr. Hurd, "that criticism was, by no means, "his talent. His taste was truly elegant; but he "had neither that vigour of understanding, nor "chastised philosophical spirit, which are so essen- "tial to this character. For what concerns his cri- "ticism on Milton in particular, and as to his own "proper observations, they are for the most part "so general and indeterminate as to afford but little "instruction to the reader, and are not unfrequently "altogether frivolous." But Addison is censured in good company, even with Bouhours and Longinus.

Some men are distinguished by a superior sensibility and a delicacy of taste, others for an acute and logical understanding; those are formed to excel in criticism, the others in philosophy. The provinces are separate; and it must be allowed, that philosophy has oftener invaded the province of criticism, than criticism of philosophy. Philosophy may indeed derive much and valuable matter from philology; but she will assimilate it to herself, and the whole will be still philosophy. She must still allow criticism to judge by a test the least fallible, when applied to works of imagination and sentiment, the genuine feelings of improved and cultivated nature. I would compare an abstruse philosopher, when he considers the works of genius, to an anatomist, who will not pronounce a human body perfect and beautiful till he has examined its internal conformation; while the man of taste may be said to resemble a sensible spectator, who at first sight, and without any laborious investigation, pronounces a figure graceful in its symmetry, shape, and colour.

What then, it will be asked, is criticism to be left for ever vague and indeterminate, and is there no standard of taste? I answer, that the feelings of the

majority of men coinciding for a number of years in the same object, constitutes a standard sufficiently certain and uniform. Men are so like each other in the constituent principles of their minds, that the work, which has pleased the greater part during a long time, will please the whole, if their minds are properly cultivated, and will please them for ever. And, as to accidental differences in opinion, or deviations from this standard, they are only the characteristic irregularities which attend every thing sublunary, and have no evil consequence on the general opinions. The persons who entertain them are pleased with their error; and, after all that has been said with an air of importance, errors in matters of taste are seldom injurious either to individuals or to society.

In truth, I think the philosophers arrogate too much, when they allow none but themselves to give sentence on the merit of a work. A polite and classical scholar, who has not immersed himself in the profundities of modern metaphysics, is, in my opinion, completely qualified for the office of a critic. If, after reading a book, he pronounces, from the general effect of it on his sentiments, that it is good or bad, solid or superficial, elegant or vulgar, sublime or low; and, if the sentence he pronounces is afterwards, or has already been confirmed by the public voice, that scholar is a critic. And, indeed, such criticism is far more valuable to the generality of readers, to serve and enlighten whom ought to be the scope of every writer, than speculative refinements.

At the same time, I would by no means disparage the admirable works of Aristotle. I have been delighted with the philosophical criticism of many writers of North Britain, and with the beautiful illustrations of ancient critics and philosophers, given to

the world by a Hurd and a Harris. All I mean to contend for is, that writers of this order should not depart from their proper sphere, that of philosophy; and, from a kind of literary lust of dominion, extend their empire over that agreeable sort of criticism, which has delighted and improved so many readers, and which has appeared so charming in the works of Longinus, Bouhours, and Addison.

As a vindication of Addison, I will cite the words of his late penetrating biographer. "Before," says he, "the profound observers of the present race re-"pose too securely on the consciousness of their "superiority to Addison, let them consider his "Remarks on Ovid, in which may be found speci-"mens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; "let them peruse likewise his Essays on Wit, and "on the Pleasures of Imagination, in which he "founds art on the base of nature, and draws the "principles of invention from dispositions inherent "in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such "as his contemners will not easily attain."

I have introduced these remarks with an intention to vindicate the liberty of readers and writers, who really might fear to give their opinions in general terms on the merit of a work, or a passage of it, while their remarks, unaccompanied with a formal and abstruse disquisition, might be in danger of receiving the contemptuous epithets of frivolous and superficial: epithets which writers ingenious indeed, but too much attached to metaphysical refinement, have ventured to bestow on that ornament of letters and of mankind, the chief writer in the Spectator: an author, whose criticisms will live and flourish, when the dry speculations which censure them shall fall to decay, and be as if they had never been.

And with respect to the value and utility of those very subtle disquisitions in criticism, which have dis-

tinguished the present age of literature, we may perhaps collect an idea of the degree in which we ought to estimate them, if we attend to the advice of a very judicious writer.

"I would advise," says a great philologist, "a "beginner in this elegant pursuit, the study of cri- "ticism, to avoid subtle and far-fetched refinement, "which, as it is for the most part adverse to perspi- "cuity and truth, may serve to make an able sophist, "but never an able critic."

No. XXVIII. *On the Periodical Essayists.*

I AM not in the number of those politicians, who estimate national good merely by extent of territory, richness of revenue, and commercial importance. I rather think that pure religion, good morals, fine taste, solid literature, and all those things, which, while they contribute to elevate human nature, contribute also to render private life dignified and comfortable, constitute that true national good, to which politics, war, and commerce, are but subordinate and instrumental. Indeed, one cannot always say so much in their praise; for, after all the noise which they make in the world, they are often injurious to every thing, for which society appears, in the eye of reason, to have been originally instituted.

Under this conviction, I cannot help thinking, that such writers as an Addison and a Steele have caused a greater degree of national good than a Marlborough and a Walpole. They have successfully re-

commended such qualities as adorn human nature, and such as tend also, in their direct consequences, to give grandeur and stability to empire. For, in truth, it is personal merit and private virtue, which can alone preserve a free country in a prosperous state, and indeed render its prosperity desirable. How are men really the better for national prosperity, when, as a nation grows rich, its morals are corrupted, mutual confidence lost, and debauchery and excess of all kinds pursued with such general and unceasing ardour, as seduces the mind to a state of abject slavery and impotence? If I am born in a country, where my mind and body are almost sure to be corrupted by the influence of universal example, and my soul deadened in all its nobler energies, what avails it, that the country extends its dominion beyond the Atlantic and the Ganges? It had been better for me that I had not been born, than born in such a country.

Moralists, therefore, who have the art to convey their instruction successfully, are the most valuable patriots, and the truest benefactors to their country. And among these I place in the highest rank, because of the more extensive diffusion of their labours, the successful writers of periodical lucubrations.

Among these, the Tatler is the first in the order of time, who will claim attention. For those which preceded were entirely political and controversial, and soon sunk into oblivion, when the violence of party which produced them had subsided. But the general purpose of the Tatler, as Steele himself declares, was to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and ostentation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, discourse, and behaviour. A book written with this purpose was sure to survive the transitory productions of polemic and political virulence.

Steele has mixed politics with morality; and, indeed, many of the first papers were of so heterogeneous a composition, that, while an attempt was made to please all tastes, there was scarcely matter sufficient in quantity of the same kind to satisfy any one. The mixture of news and politics would be disapproved in this age; but, at that time they served to allure common readers, who could scarcely, by any other means, have been enticed to give attention to subjects of taste and morality.

The papers soon acquired new lustre by the cooperation of Addison. Addison eclipsed Steele; but yet I cannot sufficiently admire the generosity of Steele, and his freedom from jealousy and envy. He felt Addison's superiority; but it seems to have excited no other emotions but gratitude and admiration. "This good office he performed," says he, speaking of the assistance which Addison gave him, "with such force of genius, humour, wit, and "learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who "calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid: I was "undone by my auxiliary." Addison, indeed, added gravity and dignity to the work, which has conferred on it a permanent value. The levity and the motley manner of Steele would not have entitled him to the attention of a succeeding age, though it might have pleased in his own day by its novelty.

The general state of conversation and of literary improvement among those who called themselves gentlemen, at the time in which the Tatler was written, was low and contemptible. The men, who from their rank, fortune, and appearance, claimed the title of gentlemen, affected a contempt for learning, and seemed to consider ignorance as a mark of gentility. The Tatler gradually opened their understandings, and furnished matter for im-

proving conversation. It not only gave them information on the particular topics on which it treated, but also, by leading them to think on all that passed before them, in a similar manner, insensibly superinduced a habit of ingenious and philosophical reflection. There was no longer a necessity of invariably recurring to politics; a subject, which is in its nature contentious, and often tends to sour the milk of human kindness. Indeed, it is said, that to divert the attention of the nation from political subjects, was one principal motive for the publication of the Tatler and Spectator. Whatever was the motive, the result was highly beneficial to the nation at large, and is felt in its influence at this hour. Steele, though he was excelled by subsequent writers, deserves all that fame and gratitude which is due to the first projectors of every important institution.

Addison, who had appeared with peculiar lustre in the Tatler, was to shine again in the Spectator with still brighter and more permanent glory. The great charm of his diction, which has delighted readers of every class, appears to me to be a certain natural sweetness, ease, and delicacy, which no affectation can attain. Truths of all kinds, the sublime and the familiar, the serious and the comic, are taught in that peculiar style, which raises in the mind a placid and equable flow of emotions; that placidness and equability, which are in a particular manner adapted to give permanency to all our pleasurable feelings. A work, which warms our passions, and hurries us on with the rapid vehemence of its style, may be read once or twice with pleasure; but it is the more tranquil style which is most frequently in unison with our minds, and which, therefore, on the tenth repetition, as Horace says, will afford fresh pleasure. Addison rejected that

levity and medley of matter, which often appeared disadvantageously in a single paper of the Tatler, and usually wrote regular treatises on the most important and most interesting subjects of taste and morality. Such subjects will never be out of date; but the strictures on the dresses and diversions of the times, whatever merit they possessed, could not have rendered the work immortal. There are, indeed, many papers of very moderate merit; but it could not be otherwise, when the publication was daily, and the whole number considerably more than half a thousand. Neither Addison's other engagements, nor his abilities, great as they confessedly were, could have allowed him to compose every speculation.

The Guardian has very properly been called a Continuation of the Spectator. Its plan and its execution are in reality the same, though the editor, as Steele may be called, intended a little variety in the original institution. The instruction was intended to be conveyed in the character of a Guardian to the Lizard family; but the design was by no means consistently supported. "The character of the Guardian," says a sagacious writer, "was too "narrow and too serious: it might properly enough "admit both the duties and the decencies of life, "but seemed not to include literary speculations, "and was in some degree violated by merriment "and burlesque. What had the Guardian of the "Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, "with nests of ants, or Strada's prolusions?"

The Tatler, the Spectator, and the Guardian claim the first rank among the periodical writers, not only because they led the way, which however is a great merit, but because they possess superior excellence, and have rendered that excellence most diffusive in its effect, by a popular mode of display-

ing it. Their example, however, has excited several followers, who have obtained and deserved a very illustrious reputation.

With respect to the Rambler, if I have prejudices concerning it, they are all in its favour. I read it at a very early age with delight, and I hope, with improvement. Every thing laudable and useful in the conduct of life is recommended in it, often in a new manner, and always with energy, and with a dignity which commands attention. When I consider it with a view to its effects on the generality of the people, on those who stand most in need of this mode of instruction, it appears greatly inferior to the easy and natural Spectator. Those elegant and expressive words derived from the Latin, which are called by common readers hard words, and which abound in the Rambler, will prevent the greater number from entering on the perusal. And indeed, with all my prepossessions in favour of this writer, I cannot but agree with the opinion of the public, which has condemned in his style an affected appearance of pomposity. The constant recurrence of sentences in the form of what have been called triplets, is disgusting to all readers. But I will remind his censurers, that Cicero himself, in several of his works, fatigues the ear by a close of his periods almost uniformly similar. Not only the numbers, but the very words are frequently repeated in a few pages. I will also take the liberty to add in his defence, that the introduction of so many unusual and well-sounding words will gradually improve the English language, though it must necessarily circumscribe the writer's popularity. It seems, however, as if he himself recognised the fault of perpetual triplets in his style, since they are by no means frequent in his last productions.

The Adventurer is an imitation of the Rambler.

It is written with remarkable spirit, and with the benevolent design of promoting all that is good and amiable. The stories make a very conspicuous figure in this work, and tend to diffuse its influence among those readers, who might probably have been deterred from reading it, had it consisted only of didactic discourses, written in a style approaching to the lexiphantic. Triplets were greatly in fashion when the Adventurer was published, and it is therefore no wonder that they abound in it. Great indeed are its merits in every view; but I cannot discover in the diction the sweetness and the delicacy of Addison.

The World is written in a style different from all the preceding. There is a certain gaiety and gentility diffused over it, which gives it a peculiar grace when considered only as a book of amusement. That it inculcates morality with any peculiar force, cannot be said. But it gives many valuable instructions, without assuming the solemn air of a severe moralist. The World appears to me when compared with the Rambler and the Adventurer, like Horace when compared with Juvenal. The philosophy of the World is the philosophy of Aristippus.

The Connoisseur abounds in wit and a very pleasant species of humour. The book, however, is rather diverting than improving; yet, under the form of irony, many useful truths are conveyed with great success. There is no elevation of sentiment, and no sublime discourses on religion and morality; but there is a great deal of good sense expressed with good-humoured drollery. The authors were by nature possessed of wit, and had acquired a very considerable knowledge of the classics. The comic writers, such as Plautus and Terence, seem to have pleased them most, and they have rather undervalued the serious writers of morality. In

one part of the twenty-seventh paper there is an oblique censure of the Rambler. "This new-fangled manner of delivering our sentiments," says the Connoisseur, "is called writing sound "sense; and, if I find this mode seems likely to "prevail, I shall certainly think it expedient to give "into it, and very suddenly oblige the world with a "Connoisseur so sensible that it will be impossi-"ble to understand it."

Every one of these works is calculated to promote good sense and virtue; and whatever may be the defects of each, the variety of their manners is well suited to the variety of dispositions and of tastes which occur in the mass of mankind. They have been found experimentally to improve life as well as conversation. And, with respect to the improvement of conversation, "nothing is so proper for "this purpose," says the solid Johnson in his preface to Addison's Poems, "as the frequent publi-"cation of short papers, which we read not as "study but amusement. If the subject be slight, "the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find "time, and the idle may find patience."

No. XXIX. *A cultivated Mind is necessary to render Retirement agreeable.*

FEW are able to bear solitude, and, though retiremet is the ostensible object of the greater part, yet, when they are enabled by success to retire, they feel themselves unhappy. Peculiar powers and elegance of mind are necessary to enable us to draw all

our resources from ourselves. In a remote and solitary village, the mind must be internally active in a great degree, or it will be miserable for want of employment. But in great and populous cities, even while it is passive, it will be constantly amused. It is impossible to walk the streets, without finding the attention powerfully solicited on every side. No exertion is necessary. Objects pour themselves into the senses, and it would be difficult to prevent their admittance. But in retirement, there must be a spirit of philosophy and a store of learning, or else all the fancied bliss will vanish, like the colours of the rainbow.

Poor Cowley might be said to be melancholy mad. He languished for solitude, and wished to hide himself in the wilds of America. But, alas! he was not able to support the solitude of a country village!

I lately paid a visit to a friend, who has withdrawn from the hurry of business to enjoy the sweets of a rural retirement in the south of Wales. His house is situated on an eminence, which commands an agreeable prospect. At the bottom of his garden, which is laid out in a taste peculiar to himself, yet entirely conformable to nature, runs a small river, remarkable for the smoothness of its surface and the clearness of its water; but though though the house is perfectly agreeable in situation, some have thought that the freshness of the air, the beauty of the scenery, and the silence of retirement, can by no means compensate the want of a neighbourhood: for, to say the truth, there is not a single house to be seen within a mile of my friend's little solitary villa, except one poor cottage, which is inhabited by his gardener.

Though I was at first, like the rest, much disposed to disapprove the solitude of my friend's habitation;

yet, when I had resided with him a little while, and had enjoyed the calm and rational pleasures of philosophic ease, I became enthusiastically fond of sequestered life. It must, indeed, be confessed, that Hilario possesses some peculiar qualities necessary to render solitude agreeable. He has a natural sweetness of temper, a refined taste for literature and music, and, at the same time, some relish for the common diversions of the country. But though he divides the greater part of his time in the alternate amusements of his books, his harpsichord, his dogs and his horses, yet is he never so happy as in the enjoyment of the conversation of a friend, whose manners and sentiments are congenial with his own.

It must not be forgotten, that he derives much of his pleasure from a knowledge of botany and natural philosophy, which he acquired in the former part of his life. His acquaintance with these sciences enables him to make great improvements in the cultivation of his garden, where almost every plant, which is curious, useful, or beautiful, is brought to its highest perfection.

It might perhaps be supposed from his sequestered manner of life, that he is utterly unacquainted with the living world. He takes care, however, to inform himself of the topic of the day, by attending to periodical publications of repute and authenticity; and he is allowed to make most pertinent observations on the taste, manners, and politics of the present times. His remarks always have this peculiarity, owing perhaps to his distance from parties, that they savour of that liberal spirit, which marks the true gentleman and the citizen of the world.

The great evil of solitude is, that reason becomes weak for want of exercise, while the powers of imagination are invigorated by indulgence. The gloomy

ideas of Popish superstition were derived from the cells of the monastery. Fanaticism and bigotry, melancholy and despair, have usually been produced in the cave and the convent. Happy in a mind furnished with ideas of every kind, Hilario is never at a loss for occasions to exert the powers of his reason; and can, at all times, divert his imagination from the horrors of the spleen, by the pleasing employments of literary pursuits.

The avocations of an active life shortened a visit which I would gladly have protracted. I return to the engagements of the world, supported by the soothing expectation, that a time will come, when I shall be able to spend the evening of life in a sweet retreat, like that of Hilario.

With a virtuous and cheerful family about one, with a few faithful and good-humoured friends, with a well-selected collection of elegant books, and with a competency, one may enjoy comforts even in the deserted village, which the city, with all its diversions, cannot supply.

No. XXX. *On Affectation of the Vices and Follies of Men of Eminence.*

It has frequently happened, that men, distinguished by their genius, have, from an unsettled habit of life, from an affectation of singularity, or from uncommon warmth of constitution, neglected the common rules of prudence, and plunged themselves into all the miseries of vice and dissipation. They who are but slightly acquainted with the lives of our

English writers, can recollect many instances of men of the brightest parts, whose lives, after an uninterrupted course of misery, have terminated under the pressure of want in the confinement of a gaol. They have been admired, and at the same time neglected; praised, and at the same time starved.

As the consequences of their imprudence are generally fatal, and generally known, a reasonable mind would scarcely believe, that any should be found ambitious of treading in their footsteps, when they err. Yet, such attraction has the brilliancy of literary reputation, that every witling, who pens a stanza, while he should be engrossing a deed, looking upon himself as a genius of uncommon magnitude, thinks it necessary, in order to complete his character, to plunge into the excesses of drunkenness and debauchery. When his follies have thrown him out of his profession, ruined his health, and shut him up in a prison, he consoles himself with reflecting, that he shares the same fate which the great wits, his predecessors, have suffered before him. He is happy even to be wretched with an Otway, a Dryden, or a Savage.

This unfortunate conduct is owing to a mistaken opinion, too generally adopted; that vice is the mark of laudable spirit, and that spirit is the characteristic of genius. Prudence, caution, common sense, are, in the idea of many, the concomitants of dulness. The phlegmatic disposition of a fool, say they, can guide him through life in the straight road of prudence; but the volatility of genius is continually tempted to turn out of the direct path to gather flowers on the sides, to view every pleasing prospect, and to discover new ways through unfrequented labyrinths.

But it may be a reasonable question, whether this propensity to deviation may not be a weakness,

rather than a superior strength of mind; whether it is not sometimes the voluntary effect of pride and affectation; and whether it is not oftener caused by a restlessness of constitution, than by a more energetic activity, or an acuter perception. Sensibility of mind, and fineness of feelings, are always the attendants of true genius. These, which by themselves constitute a good heart, when joined to a good head, naturally give a greater tendency to virtue than to vice: for they are naturally charmed with beauty, and disgusted with deformity of every kind. Virtue, therefore, who is amiable in the eyes of her enemies, must have additional charms for those whose susceptibility of beauty is more delicate and refined; and vice, who is naturally loathsome, must appear uncommonly odious to those who are uncommonly shocked at every species of turpitude.

Nor want there instances to prove, that men of the most exalted genius can be men of the most unspotted virtue. Addison, the glory of our nation, was only equalled in his abilities by his piety, by the purity of his morals, the integrity of his heart, and the prudence of his conduct. Pope was a man of exemplary piety and goodness. Gay, though licentious in his writings, is said to have been uncontaminated by the vices of the world, and though instances are numerous on the other side, yet these few are sufficient for the refutation of that prevalent notion, that great genius is incompatible with singular prudence and consistent virtue.

The folly of those who are only pretenders to genius, and who affect vice as essential to the character they assume, is as pitiable as it is ridiculous. Their egregious vanity will probably render all addresses to them useles: but they may take it is an infallible prediction, that dear-bought experience will soon induce them to wish they had altered their

conduct, when it shall be too late to enjoy the benefits of an early amendment.

The fatal error of supposing vice the characteristic of spirit, has led many a parent to undo the child whose happiness he most wished to promote. The man of parts and fashion sends indeed his boy to school; but cannot bear that he should apply to books with any remarkable diligence, lest he should be mistaken for a plodder; nor that he should be singularly tractable and modest, lest he should be thought deficient in spirit; but ventures to form sanguine hopes of his future eminence, if he is the ringleader of every riot, and is fortunate enough to gain at school the appellation of a Pickle.

Great writers have indeed indirectly patronized the cause of scepticism and immorality; but if names are to have weight in this argument, to a Hume, a Rousseau, a Voltaire, we may confidently oppose, a Lowth, a Hurd, a Johnson, and many more in the retired walks of literary life, whom every Virtue, as well as every Muse, is proud to claim as her deserving votary.

No. XXXI. *On the Inequalities of Genius.*

The experience of every man, who has devoted himself to literature, will evince the truth of the remark, that there are times when the mind, however impelled by inclination, or urged by necessity, is incapable of submitting to the confinement of application. The liveliest imaginations, and the strongest intellects, are sometimes bewildered in

dulness and stupidity, and a Homer nods with all the drowsiness of a Bavius.

There are, in consequence of the unequal power of exertion which the mind experiences, inequalities of excellence in every author, whether ancient or modern. The most admired productions have some parts, in which not only no merit is visible, but which abound with faults. It can neither be supposed, that the failures arise from real and inherent inability, or that they are voluntary. Their authors acknowledged excellencies in other performances, will not admit the former; and their solicitude for the success of their works must exclude the latter supposition. Such an effect can, therefore, be attributed to no cause, but the unaccountable inequalities of the finest genius, at different hours, and in different situations.

The English can boast a numerous train of writers, who, in their several departments, have approached very nearly to the standard of perfection; but scarcely one of them can be named, whose works are not deformed by compositions utterly unworthy of him. It is hardly credible, that the author of Paradise Lost could have produced some of those sonnets which pass under his name, but which bear no mark of his genius. Dryden, who wrote the ode on Cæcilia's day, composed a set of wretched tragedies in rhyme; the ode was, indeed, dictated by genius, but the tragedies arose from no other inspiration than that of want.

In this point, as well as in many others, there is an exact analogy between the moral and literary world. It has long been the complaint of the experienced, that no human foresight, no prudence, can at all times ensure prosperity, and avert ill-fortune. Something still arises to baffle the counsels of the wise, and to counteract the intentions of the good.

The Roman satirist has indeed asserted, that Fortune is a deity of our own creation, and that he, who submits to the guidance of prudence, needs not the interposition of any supernatural power; but experience proves the assertion to be rather the effusion of a rigid and affected philosophy, than the cool suggestion of well informed reason. The observation of a sacred moralist, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, is more agreeable to truth, and has been confirmed by the repeated testimony of some thousand years. Wisdom is often found guilty of folly, and ingenuity of error.

Of the fluctuation of mental vigour in the same individual, there is a remarkable instance in the great Newton. Of him it is said, that, in the advanced period of his life, he was unable to comprehend his own works. That understanding, which once penetrated far beyond the limits of the visible creation, became so debilitated, as to be incapable of retracing its own progress: a memorable instance of human infirmity, sufficient to humble pride, and silence envy.

As merit cannot always ensure success, even in the exertion of its peculiar excellence, so is it by no means certain of obtaining a good reception in the world: for history and experience furnish many examples to prove, that wealth and power are not the necessary consequences of wisdom and virtue. To be wise and virtuous, may be learned from an Epictetus; to be fortunate, from others.

It might indeed be supposed, that strength of intellects, accuracy of judgment, and extensive erudition, would either secure to themselves good fortune, or would, at least, be rewarded by the world; but it is an incontestable truth, that poets and philosophers, of every age and every nation, have been

almost as much distinguished by their indigence, as their ingenuity. Poverty and poetry are almost synonymous, while the unerring experience of mankind has reduced it to a proverb, that "fools have fortune."

The insufficiency of merit, and of honest endeavours, to the acquisition of fame and fortune, has given occasion to the discontented to repine, and to censure the œconomy of human affairs; but they, who are conversant in the investigation of final causes, easily perceive, that such a dispensation tends to perfect virtue, by the exercise of patience.

All sublunary excellence is indeed transitory. Not only the external goods of fortune, but the mental advantages, which are commonly represented as out of the reach of accident, are subject to decay and perpetual fluctuation. They who labour to ascend the heights of virtue and learning, often slide back in their passage, or fall at once from the summit when it is attained. If then neither wisdom, knowledge, genius, nor virtue, are stable and stationary, we must learn not to confide in them with presumptuous security, but to put our whole trust, where alone it can repose without danger, *even on the rock of ages.*

No. XXXII. *Men of Genius do not always excel in common Conversation. In a Letter.*

When you were with me last, I remember you expressed your surprise, that Varus, who has indubitable marks of true genius in his writings, ap-

peared utterly destitute of spirit and vivacity in conversation. You seemed at a loss to account for the dulness of a man, whose pages are replete with wit and humour; and you were astonished to find, that he who had engaged in the deepest disquisitions with all the subtilty of argument, appeared unable to support a trifling conversation on the common topics of the day. You did not perhaps recollect, that great minds can exert themselves with full force only on great occasions. Either from pride, disuse; or natural inability, poets and philosophers are known to appear inferior in the arts of conversation, and the little decencies of common life, to the illiterate beau, and the superficial female.

It has been said, you know, that they who are employed in sublime speculations, learn to despise every subordinate object as unworthy their regard or cultivation. Where this is really the case, it is easy to account for the awkwardness of men of wit and letters; for it is impossible to bestow pains in the acquisition of what we despise: but your own, as well as my experience, will furnish instances of those who have thought it a misfortune not to be able to shine at the tea-table as well as in the schools. A man of this character, though he can trace a system through all its mazes, is often incapable of expatiating on the common subjects of a new play, a new face, a new ministry, with tolerable accuracy or politeness.

One might naturally suppose, however, that when at last these exalted personages condescend to open their lips, something uncommonly excellent would come out; but we often, in other instances as well as in this, indulge our expectations farther than reason and experience seem to justify. The greatest men are still but men, and in the common inter-

course of life, are of necessity upon a level with the vulgar. I dare say, you remember a shrewd remark of a writer, whose name I cannot recollect, That no great man ever appeared great in the eyes of his *valet de chambre*. In truth many objects in the moral, as well as natural world, seem larger when viewed imperfectly and obscurely. The meteor which strikes the distant beholder with fear and astonishment, is found, upon a nearer view, to be nothing but a vapour; and the philosopher, who is the object of awe and veneration among those who never approach him, becomes, when closely inspected in the humble occupations of common life, little more than a common man.

Life has often been compared to a Drama, and the world to a Stage. I believe the subject we have been now considering will increase the resemblance. Various indeed are the characters when they appear on the public Stage; but when they retire behind the scenes, and put off the glittering outside which fascinated beholders, the monarch, the hero, the philosopher, are found in those common weaknesses which humiliate their aspiring nature, to be more nearly on a level with the peasant, than their pride is willing to allow.

It has been said, that one man is capable of excelling others, in qualities superinduced by his own efforts, as much as the species of man surpasses the species of brutes. This indeed is apparently true; yet he who expects to find the most improved individuals uniformly excellent, knows little of human nature. A Grandison is scarcely less fabulous than a Phœnix.

All sorts of excellencies can never be united in one man. The world is unreasonable when it expects, that they who write well should always shine in the little arts of convivial intercourse. It is

enough, that their minds are engaged in subjects of importance, and that they are both able and willing to communicate their meditations to the Public. Few have written better than Addison, yet Addison was remarkable for taciturnity. He was however, we are told, agreeable and talkative among select friends and men of letters. In truth, conversation cannot be long supported with spirit, but among equals in point of abilities and attainments; and men of great genius and profound learning do not often meet their equals.

No. XXXIII. *Verbal Criticism undeservedly despised. In a Letter.*

I CANNOT help thinking you were too severe in what you said against those critics who have employed themselves in verbal disquisitions. You well know, that ridicule can make things, of acknowledged utility, appear vain and frivolous. And to tell you the truth, I believe, you do not keep your exquisite talent for ridicule under that restraint, which candour and moderation seem to require.

I must indeed allow, that Verbal Criticism, like many other laudable pursuits, is apt to deviate into absurdity, when not under the regulation of reason and good sense. Inquiries into the works of nature are highly useful and pleasing; but even these have been perverted by ignorance and bigotry, and have produced those disgraces of the human mind, alchemy and judicial astrology. Investigations of the manners and institutions of antiquity are known

to promote knowledge, by ascertaining ambiguous subjects, and to give pleasure, by gratifying a natural curiosity; these however have likewise degenerated into all those absurdities which form the character of the pedantic antiquarian, and the trifling virtuoso.

When you censure verbal critics, you certainly forget how much you are indebted to them. Believe me, you would never have had that general acquaintance with the classics, had you been obliged to toil through all those difficulties, which the Commentators, at the revival of learning, took such pains to remove. Rescued from the cells of Monks, whose minds were as dark as their habitations, the manuscripts of ancient authors were full of errors and interpolations, and it was impossible to read a page of many celebrated writings without being embarrassed with obscurity and impeded by chasms, which collation or conjecture only could supply. You may laugh, if you please, at the phlegmatic disposition of those who could go through the drudgery of collating a dozen manuscript copies, to find the proper place of a conjunction or an adverb; yet, however merry you may be on the occasion, you will be obliged to acknowledge the utility of the labour. I am aware, that these painstaking students have been stigmatized with appellations of the lowest kind, and that they have been called porters in the republic of letters, and their works, the scaffoldings of literature: but let it be remembered, that though the greatest share of praise be due to the architect, yet will his plans and models, however ingeniously formed, avail but little without the co-operation of the labourer, and the assistance of the scaffold.

But without insisting on the advantage derived from this kind of criticism, in the illustration of

ancient authors, I think it evident, that it deserves cultivation, were it only because it contributes to ascertain, and to refine our own language.

If you review the state of Literature, you will find few writers who have attained an elegance in their own language, before it has been examined by grammarians, and reduced to fixed rules of analogy. Strength and vigour they may perhaps have displayed, since these are the genuine products of natural genius. But to the most animated sentiments, and nervous expressions, they have been unable to add the grace of a correct and polished style.

If then we make pretensions to taste, and prefer elegance to deformity, and perspicuity to confusion, we must not refuse, to verbal criticism, that praise which we readily bestow on the other parts of literature.

The world has long been prejudiced against compilers of Dictionaries, and has viewed them rather in the light of elaborate plodders, than of men of taste and genius; but candour must confess, that learning is more indebted to Dictionaries and Lexicons, than to any other production whatever; since, without these, the ancient writings, those sources of literature, must have remained unintelligible. The English language has been enriched by the Shakspeares, the Miltons, the Lockes of former times; but it may with truth be said, to have been refined and embellished by the grammarians and the great lexicographer of the present age. It is from the labours of verbal critics, that our language will receive the only excellencies it wanted, purity and correctness.

No. XXXIV. *On the Necessity and Method of Encouraging in the Community the Prevalence of Virtuous Love.*

THE passion of love possesses an influence on life so extensive and important, that the moralist, who takes it not into consideration, is guilty of a great omission. Virtuous love is not only attended with the sweetest pleasures which this life affords, but is highly conducive to the improvement of human nature. Like the sun in the spring, whose warmth calls forth the latent powers of vegetation, love excites and cherishes some of those amiable dispositions, which would otherwise have remained for ever in a concealed and a torpid state. It often improves the understanding no less than the heart, and the transformation which Iphigenia is said to have produced in Cymon, is neither unnatural nor uncommon.

But it seems to be a just complaint, that virtuous love is of late much less frequent than it has been, and than it ought to be. A very gross passion, which usurps the name of love, but which, instead of improving the heart or the faculties, degrades them both, is become more universal and more licentious. Where lust and libertinism greatly prevail, the hearts of the people at large are too debauched to be able to entertain a virtuous passion for a single object. Thus marriage is avoided as a restraint, or, if it is sought, it is sought from interest alone. But the greater part of women are not blest with the gifts of fortune. How then are they to be entered into a state, for which God, and nature, and reason, and virtue, evidently designed them?

Their whole dependence for nuptial felicity, and indeed for the accomplishment of one great end of their existence, must rest on the power they possess of exciting a virtuous affection: a poor dependence according to the state of morals in this age! for, with all the graces of personal beauty, and the superior charms of delicacy and sense, virtuous women will be slighted, and even despised, by the greater number of young men, who even glory in having blasted the budding blossoms of love in the pestilential air of a brothel, and who have sacrificed those first fine sensibilities, which return no more, to some infamous and impure prostitute. So the rose of beauty and of innocence blooms and decays unplucked. He who should admire it, love it and take it to his bosom, turns away to cull the noisome weed which stings him while he touches it, and ultimately poisons both his body and his mind.

I wish it were in the power of the moralist to restore the rights of female innocence and beauty, and to relume the lamp of virtuous love. The virtue and happiness of both sexes would be greatly augmented by such an event. It seems, indeed, that it would be peculiarly favourable to female dignity, upon which the good morals of the world greatly depend. For whatever authority the men may claim, experience has uniformly proved, that the affairs of the world are in great measure regulated by the women. If their minds are properly improved, and their sentiments duly exalted, the great influence they possess will be directed to promote all that can render life more dignified and comfortable. But if they unite in increasing profligacy, or do not exert themselves to oppose it, that profligacy will be extreme. They should openly profess, not only to pursue virtue, and all that is laudable in themselves, but to value the men most, who most

excel in virtue and in laudable qualities. They may rest assured, that when they cease to listen to licentious love, they will be courted with all the ardour and idolatrous veneration of a pure and a virtuous heart. They will rise in the ideas of the lover, and will appear to deserve the epithet of angelic, which he now often bestows on them merely in derision.

The neglected ladies may assure themselves, that the mutual passion of the sexes is too powerful to be overcome by any human art. But it may be ill directed, and taught to defeat its natural purpose. And here it must be confessed, that the rare appearance of virtuous love, and the neglect which virtuous women experience in this age, is in great measure derived from the increase of female prostitution. Young men are allowed great liberties by the foolish indulgence of parents, and they cannot use those liberties in walking the streets, without being solicited to gratify and pall those passions, which were meant to give ardour and perseverance to a virtuous love. It is but too probable, that the majority will listen to the syren song; and the very first debauch will take off that keen edge of sensibility which would have led to a virtuous connexion. In vain is some beautiful, accomplished, and innocent creature, recommended to the young heir by his parents, and her own beauty and merit. He declares himself averse from marriage. But why? From reason and principle? The truth is, that he has lost his sensibilities in the haunts of vice, and will not marry till a rottenness of bones, and a dissipation of fortune, have rendered a nurse and a dowry desirable. But had he never fallen into the snares of the prostitute, he would have retained his natural affection, and could not have resisted youth, beauty, and elegance united. Some happy maid, who is now left

to pine away in celibacy, would triumphantly have dragged the willing captive to the altar; but he has learned a degree of cunning in the regions of old Drury, which teaches him to defy beauty, and to despise the very idea of matrimony, but as it may tend to the augmentation of his fortune. With his cunning, he has probably gained diseases and debility, which are better adapted to raise a nausea than conciliate affection. The inference I mean to draw from these remarks is, that the public good requires, that the vigilance of the magistrate should be faithfully exerted in diminishing the number of prostitutes. Instead of which it has been sometimes insinuated, that they are politically necessary.

I cannot help thinking also, that the restraints of law, which through the interposition of avarice and ambition, have been laid on marriage, have greatly contributed to discourage virtuous love, and to promote debauchery. The marriage-act, it is said, is justified by the example of foreign nations; but so also is arbitrary power, and there are few acts, which, in their nature and spirit, tend more to despotism than the marriage-act. But, omitting to consider it in a political view, I shall view it for a moment as it affects the morals of the sexes. Men marry, and ought indeed to marry, from the influence of love, as well as from the dictates of prudence. Let us then suppose the case of two young and virtuous persons powerfully struck with each other's agreeable qualities, and deeply in love. If they could be married without delay, and without a tedious attention to a variety of troublesome and expensive formalities, it is highly probable they would immediately marry. If they have not self-command, the consequences of being obliged to postpone a legal union are such as terminate in

shame and ruin. If they resolve to go through all the forms of the marriage-act, and to wait years for the accomplishment of their wishes, as poor human nature cannot constantly keep alive any of its better passions during a very long time, the lover cools, or finds new objects, or learns to gratify his sensual appetites where no restraints are required. The maid is forsaken, and the lover corrupted. Had they been married, both might have been happy and useful members of society. Marriage tends greatly to promote virtue of every sort; not only as it furnishes a lawful and natural mode of gratifying the passions, but as it calls forth industry, and renders a good character and the esteem of others desirable, because necessary to the support of a family. But though I will venture to assert, that the multiplication of restraints on the proper intercourse of the sexes naturally tends to promote an improper intercourse, since an intercourse there must be, yet I will add, that alterations in an act, in which the domestic happiness of every family in the kingdom is interested, should not take place, but after the coolest deliberation, and the testimony of long and decisive experience. Villains, there is no doubt, will avail themselves of a freedom from restraint, to allure the incautious female into matrimony, merely for the sake of her fortune, which will perhaps be expended in supporting a courtesan. Surely some precaution must be taken by human laws to prevent this cruel species of robbery. To rob a father of his child, and then to forsake or injure that child!—none but a father can feel the agonizing pang that rises on the reflection.

The best method of increasing virtuous love is to pay peculiar attention to the moral and religious education of both the sexes. Polite and learned accomplishments are often so attended to as to ex-

clude the formation of virtuous principles. As to the education of girls, in particular, it has been severely though truly said, that many of them are trained as if they were to be prostitutes by profession. They are often left unacquainted with œconomical management, or with any one art that can render them useful. The higher classes are totally at a loss even in the first management of their offspring; and it is not to be wondered at, if they, who know not how to be wives, are soon degraded to the rank of harlots. A proper education, consisting of moral, religious, literate, and œconomical instruction, cannot fail to make them set a due value on themselves, and to enable them to pursue the methods most consistent with their dignity and happiness. She who is taught to say her prayers, and to value the testimony of a good conscience, will at once be rendered a fitter object of virtuous love, and less inclined to encourage any other. She will be respected as well as loved, as capable of becoming a valuable wife, and will be only not courted with the wantonness of transitory desire merely as a mistress.

The women, it must be owned, are in this age greatly their own enemies. It is a just complaint, that the men are less sensible of their beauty and accomplishments than they ought to be. But it must be remembered, that such is the nature of man, that he despises every good which is too obvious and too plentiful. The women have confessedly laid aside *reserve*. The men have, by a natural consequence, suspended their admiration. Ease and forwardness of address, and excessive familiarity, are established by the law of fashion; and neglect and contempt follow by the law of nature. Woman was designed to be pursued, and not to pursue. A veil increases beauty, and reserve

increases and preserves love by mixing it with respect. Where there is no respect, there is no virtuous love. What looks like it, is a devil in an angel's form, even lust: an indelicate name indeed; but let it be remembered, that to bestow good names on bad things is to give them a passport in the world, under a delusive disguise.

The understandings of women are in every respect equal to those of men when equally cultivated. They must perceive themselves greatly interested in diffusing among the men the ardour and sincerity of a virtuous love. Their understandings and hearts are both well able to accomplish this great purpose. I offer only imperfect hints. The women will improve upon them, I hope, and show their utility by giving them real efficacy. I doubt not but that, upon reflection, they will be as desirous as they are able, to stop the progress of female corruption by means very different from the establishment of polygamy.

Let the rights of nature be restored, and let her empire be bounded by no other restraints but those which religion, reason, and experience have established.

No. XXXV. *Hints to those who are designed for the Life of a Gentleman without a Profession.*

To inherit an affluent fortune, and to be exempted from the vulgar cares of life, seems to be a lot pecu-

liarly favourable to the advancement and the security of human happiness. The greater number of men are compelled by necessity to proceed in the same road, without liberty to deviate or select the objects of their attention; but the rich heir beholds the world, and all that it contains, placed like a plentiful feast before him, and appears to have little else to do, but to reach out his hand, and to take what he finds most agreeable to his taste.

Such a lot is usually envied; but it is really not happier than others. Providence is not so partial, as, on a first and a cursory view, it appears to be. It seems indeed to establish a kind of equilibrium of happiness. And experience evinces, that caprice, false delicacy, artificial wants, vanity, pride, covetousness, and envy, usually render the lives of the rich and unemployed, not in the least more pleasurable than the condition of the honest, healthy, and industrious poor.

It is however certain, that to inherit an independent fortune is in itself a noble privilege, and that it ought to be highly conducive to real enjoyment. I shall therefore beg leave to offer a few hints to those, who are setting out in life with the distinguished advantage of a rich inheritance. As all the real benefit of such a condition depends on the judicious use of it, if the moralist can point out means to secure that point, he may be said to contribute more to the improvement of the young man's estate, than if he procured a subscription to a loan, or put him in a way to make ten *per cent* of his money.

In the first place, I hope the young man will not be so mistaken in his ideas of happiness as to imagine, that he can be happy in doing nothing. Universal and unvaried experience has proved, that he who

does nothing is a wretch. The same experience has declared it probable, that he will not only be miserable but wicked.

He must resolve to render himself useful on two accounts: first, because it is a duty he owes the community in return for the protection of his property; and, secondly, because it is a duty he owes to himself to be as happy as possible: and this cannot be, notwithstanding all the real and pretended gratifications of riches, without useful activity. It will not be enough to make him sleep with tranquillity, merely to have dressed well, to have danced at a ball, presided at a horse-race, or driven a phaeton. Riding a showy horse, whipping a pair of low geldings from a high four-wheeled chaise, and sauntering in a stable, are indeed, in the present age, some of the most glorious methods of spending the sprightly days of youth, when privileged by the early possession of a fortune. But when I see the phaeton whisking by, and the lazy youth lolling on its side, I cannot help thinking the man at the tail of the plough a more useful, happy, and respectable member of society. There is not, indeed, the least impropriety in these pleasures, when pursued merely as a temporary relaxation; but all, who know any thing of the world, will agree with me, that young men of fortune usually, in these times, make grooms their companions, a stable their study, and the driving a horse, or a pair of horses, the utmost extent of their activity, as a high phaeton, is the summit of their ambition.

But what, says the young heir, have I to do but to amuse myself? I have no trade, no profession, nor any necessity for either. Why may I not divert myself with any trifle which can excite my attention? But are you sure, I will ask in return, that you have no necessary employment, to the per-

formance of which, according to your abilities, you are as much obliged by duty, reason, honour, and conscience, as the labourer is bound to finish the work for which he is hired? I believe I can point out some laudable occupations, in which you ought to engage, and in comparison of which, the driving of a phaeton, the vanity of dress, and ten thousand other vanities, will appear as the playthings of an infant.

The first object of a youth, who possesses affluence acquired by his forefathers, should be the improvement of his mind. Without this, young man, whatever may be your money, and whatever your titles, if you have any, you will be a poor, mean, contemptible, and pitiful creature. You must read; you must select your reading with judgment, and reflect upon it with long and serious attention. You must acquire a taste for moral philosophy, and learn to curb your overbearing insolence, and all other irregularities of your temper and your passions. For it is a shame to make use of your riches and your grandeur merely to assume a licence for degrading yourself to a brute. You must, in a word, have a liberal education; an education not only liberal in name, but really polite, learned, and comprehensive. You will find your nature raised by it, and yourself become a superior being, in comparison with what you would have been without it. It will exalt you more than a ducal coronet. In conjunction with wealth or honours, or both, it will render you the blessing and the glory of your country. Remember also, that, if you slight religion, that Providence which gave you riches, will punish your ingratitude by rendering them a curse.

After a youth spent in preparation, in the study of the classics, of moral and natural philosophy, and in the correction of the temper and the disorders of

the passions, it will be time to enter on the proper employments of a mature age. You will very laudably desire to have a share in the legislation; you will take upon you the office of a justice of peace; you will be ready at all times to sit in judgment on the dearest rights of your countrymen as a juryman; you will willingly assume the office of guardian to public charities, inspector of public works, giving your time and your presence for the public benefit: a gift often more valuable than a pecuniary benefaction. You will use your influence to inquire into and to correct abuses of trust, to remove nuisances, to improve roads, to build bridges, to repair public buildings, and to encourage all works of public ornament and utility.

These may constitute your public employments. You have many of a private nature scarcely less necessary. I would recommend it to you to live, if not the whole year, yet all that part of it which is not necessary to be spent near the senate-house, on your own estate in the country. Condescend to look into your affairs, and into all the more important matters of œconomy yourself. This will employ you well, and will prevent injustice to your tradesmen, and embarrassment to yourself and your offspring. It will prevent that ruin, which, at this time, stalks over the land, and diffuses desolation. You will study to improve agriculture: a delightful employment, and capable of producing great advantages, since agriculture has long been in the hands of those, who, from the obstinacy of ignorance, oppose all attempts to introduce new methods of cultivation. You will adorn your grounds with plantations, and not forget to drop the acorn, which is to supply your country with her future bulwarks.

You will adopt something of the old British hos-

pitality. You will, indeed, do right to select your guests; for indiscriminate hospitality tends only to promote gluttony and discourage merit. Men of learning, and all good men, for your own sake and for theirs, ought to claim your exclusive favour. Let your feasts be feasts where the mind, as well as the palate, may be delighted. Discountenance the profligacy of your neighbours by the silent but powerful reproof of neglect. Be not carried away by the fascination of fashion and grandeur, but love and cherish merit in all its obscurities.

Free from all professional avocations, you will have ample leisure to attend to your family; a field well fitted for the display of the best virtues and most valuable qualities. Every family is a little community, and he, who governs it well, supports a very noble character, that of the *paterfamilias*, or the patriarch. The proper management of the various tempers and dispositions which compose large families, the reformation of abuses, the correction of errors, the teaching of duties, will by themselves claim a considerable share of your time and attention. But, if you have many children, you need never want employment. The care and instruction of them, in all the various duties and departments, might very honourably fill a life. You must beware of falling into a common and fatal error among the favourites of fortune, that of thinking domestic pleasures, cares, and duties, beneath their attention.

Though you have no appointed profession, let your assumed profession be to do good, of every sort and in every degree, as far as you are able. The world abounds with evil, moral, natural, real, and imaginary. He alone who does all he can, wherever his influence extends, to mitigate and remove

it, is the *true gentleman*. Others are only esquires, knights, baronets, barons, viscounts, earls, marquises, dukes, and kings.

No. XXXVI. *The Want of Personal Beauty a frequent Cause of Virtue and Happiness.*

It has been justly said, that no one ever despised beauty who possessed it. It is, indeed, a noble privilege to be able to give pleasure, wherever one goes, merely by one's presence, and without the trouble of exertion. The respect which is paid to beauty, and the recommendation it gives to all our good qualities, are circumstances sufficiently advantageous to render the person, who has been blest with it, sincerely grateful.

But the majority of mankind, if they are not deformed, are yet not beautiful. And this is a wise and benevolent dispensation of Providence; for, notwithstanding the pretensions of beauty, I am convinced, that the want of it is attended with great benefit to society. Man is naturally desirous of rendering himself, in some respect, valuable and amiable; and, if he has nothing external to recommend him, will endeavour to compensate his defect by the acquisition of internal excellence. But that the virtues of the heart, and the abilities of the understanding, contribute much more to public benefit than any corporeal accomplishment, is a truth which needs no illustration.

It is indeed a well-known fact, that the best

poets, philosophers, writers, and artists, have been of the number of those who were, in some measure, prevented in their youth from indulging idleness and profligacy, either by some constitutional infirmity, or by the want of those personal graces, which are the greatest allurements to a life of dissipation. Among a thousand instances, in confirmation of this truth, I will select that of Pope; to the deformity and imbecility of whose body we may attribute his early and constant application to poetry. Where there are powerful solicitations to the pleasures of sense, very little attention will be paid to the pure delights of the mind.

But it is more particularly my design to point out some advantages attending the want of beauty in women: a want which will always be considered by them as a misfortune. But all misfortunes admit of consolation; and many of them, under a judicious conduct, may be metamorphosed into blessings. But while I consider the advantages attending the want of personal charms, I must not be understood to undervalue beauty. If we admire the lifeless works of art, much more should we be delighted with the living feature, in which are united symmetry and expression. It is nature's command that we should be charmed with her productions, both animate and inanimate; and our hearts are most willingly obedient when she bids us admire beauty in our own species. Taste, fancy, and affection, are then all at once most powerfully assaulted, and it would be as unnatural as it is in vain to resist, by refusing our admiration.

But after our admiration is over, we shall find, when we exercise our reflection and judgment, what experience has indeed often proved, that plain women are the most valuable. It may appear paradoxical, but I will assert it to be true, that plain

women are usually found, as the companions of life, the most agreeable. They are indeed for the most part, I do not say always, the best daughters, the best wives, the best mothers; most important relations, and most honourable to those who support them with propriety. They who aim not at such characters, but live only to display a pretty face, can scarcely rank higher than a painted doll, or a blockhead, placed with a cap on it, in a millener's window.

There is something of an irritability in the constitution of women whose minds are uncultivated, which, when increased by opposition, and confirmed by habit, usually pruduces a termagant, a shrew, or a virago: characters which, from the torment they occasion, may be said greatly to participate of an infernal nature. Nothing but reading, reflection, and indeed what is called a liberal education, can in general smooth this natural asperity. A woman who, by attending to her face, is led to neglect the mind, and who, besides, has been flattered in her youth by the admirers of her beauty, seldom fails, in the more advanced periods of her life, to vent the virulence of her temper, now soured and blackened by neglect, on all who have the misfortune to approach her. Her husband, if she has peradventure entangled some miserable wight, undergoes such torments as might justly rescue him from purgatory, by the plea of already having suffered it.

But folly and ignorance are almost as pregnant with domestic misery as a bad temper. And how shall she avoid folly and ignorance, with all their train of whims, fickleness, fears, false delicacies, vanity, pride, affectation, envy, peevishness, fretfulness, childishness, and *weakness of nerves*, who has spent all the days when she was young, and all the days she thought herself young, at her toilette,

and under the hands of the friseur? She found herself admired wherever she went, without saying or doing any thing admirable. She has therefore saved herself the trouble of forming a taste for reading, or a habit of thinking. But beauty is a rose which soon withers. She loses the power of pleasing others; and, alas! possesses none to please herself, which can supply the place of flattery and pretended adoration. As her life began and continued in folly, so it ends in misery. If she married, she was useless at least, and probably tormenting to her husband. If she continued unmarried, she possessed few qualities to render her acquaintance solicited, and none that could afford her a rational amusement in solitude.

It may indeed happen, that a beautiful woman may be educated with uncommon vigilance, that she may possess a remarkably good understanding, and as good a disposition. In this case, her beauty will be doubly valuable, not only from its real excellence when combined with a cultivated understanding, but from the difficulty of attending to the graces of the mind amidst the cares of the person, and the flattery of foolish admirers. It is certainly possible, that a beautiful woman may be as accomplished as a plain woman, and I know that, in this age, there are many instances of it; but I am speaking of probabilities, and I think it much more probable, that plain women will be, in general, better furnished with those two necessary ingredients to domestic happiness, a corrected temper, and a cultivated understanding.

Let us suppose a case, for the sake of exemplifying the subject, and let it be something like the following. A young lady, whose person is plain, cannot help observing how much she is neglected at public assemblies, and what universal attention is

paid to beauty. She will naturally feel a desire to partake of the respect. She revolves in her mind the most likely methods of accomplishing her purpose. As to her features and shape, it is in vain to think of altering them. She must draw her resources from her mind and her temper. She will study to collect ideas, in order to render her conversation agreeable. She will therefore read, and observe, and reflect, and remember. Her eager desire to gain esteem will stimulate her industry, and give steadiness to her application. With these she cannot fail to succeed. Her mind will be stored with knowledge, which will produce itself in conversation with all the graces of ease and elegance. The improvement of her mind will have a natural effect in the improvement of her temper; for every part of polite learning tends to soften and harmonize the disposition. But she will also pay particular attention to the regulation of her temper; for she will justly argue, that envy and ill-nature will add distortion and ugliness to a set of features originally not worse than plain or indifferent. She will study to compensate her defects, not only by rendering herself intelligent and good tempered, but useful. She will therefore study the practical parts of domestic œconomy; those parts of humble but valuable knowledge, with which a fine lady, with a fine face, would scorn to meddle, lest she should be defiled. Thus sensible, good tempered, and useful, her company would be sought by men of sense and character; and, if any one of them should be disposed to marry, I have little doubt but that she would be his choice, in preference to a mere beauty, who has scarcely one excellent or useful quality to render her a good wife, mother, and mistress of a family.

Suppose our plain lady married. Her gratitude

will be powerfully excited in return for the preference given to her amidst so many others who are talked of, and toasted, and admired. All her attention will be bestowed in making the man happy, who has made her happy in so flattering a manner. Her understanding has been enlightened, and her temper sweetened by her own exertions. She will therefore be an entertaining as well as tender and affectionate companion. She has been accustomed to solid pleasures, for her plain person secluded her from vanity. She therefore seeks and finds comfort at home. She is not always wishing to frequent the places of public amusement, but thinks the day happily closed, if she can look back and find no domestic duty omitted.

Suppose her a mother. As she has furnished herself with ideas, she will be able to impart them to her children. She will teach them to entertain a proper knowledge of the world, and not lead them, by her example, to admire only its vanities. She will be able to educate her daughters completely, and to initiate and improve her sons. In the mean time, the fine lady, who has been taught to idolize her own face, and to doat on vanity, will neither be able nor willing to interest herself in such disagreeable matters as the care of her noisy children, whom she almost detests, since they make her look old as they grow up, and are an impediment to her extravagance and dissipation. At the age of thirty or forty, whether of the two is the more amiable? Who now takes notice of the plain lady's face, or the handsome lady's beauty? The plain lady, in all probability, is esteemed, and the handsome lady pitied or despised. But this is not all; for the one is happy and useful, the other burthensome and miserable.

Juvenal, in his celebrated satire on the vanity of

human wishes, laments that the accomplishment of our wishes would often be the cause of our destruction, and that such are our prayers, that, if heaven were always propitious, it would often be unkind. Who wishes not beauty in his children? Yet beauty has been the bane of myriads, whom deformity might have saved from ruin, and rendered useful, happy, and respectable.

I have thus attempted, in this paper, to console that very worthy part of the sex, who have not to boast the finest tincture of a skin, nor the most perfect symmetry of shape and features, and who are often not only neglected, but even ridiculed by the unfeeling man of pleasure. It is surely a comfortable reflection, that, though nature has treated their persons rather rudely, her apparent malignity may be turned to a benefit; and that a very plain system of features may really be the cause of rendering them more engaging, and more permanently happy, as well as better able to communicate happiness, than the most celebrated toast, whose mind is unimbellished. She indeed may shine a little while in the fashionable sphere, while she exhibits the transitory gloss of novelty, but soon drops her honours, like the gaudy tulip, and is no more remembered.

No. XXXVII. *On an Excessive and Indiscriminate Love of Company, and an Abhorrence of Occasional Solitude.*

THERE are few conditions less desirable than that of the man who has no resources in himself, and

who is totally dependent on others for his daily amusement. Yet there are great numbers who consider solitude as synonymous with misery, and who are ready to associate with any company, rather than be left alone. This weakness, for a great weakness it is, renders the mind base and mean enough to submit to any neglect, coolness, or contempt, in order to be admitted into a party, or not to be excluded from a dinner. It is the cause and the consequence of a feverish and restless state, totally inconsistent with solid comfort and rational enjoyment.

The love of company and of social pleasures is indeed quite natural, and is attended with some of the sweetest satisfactions of human life; but, like every other love, when it proceeds beyond the limits of moderation, it ceases to produce its natural effect, and terminates in disgustful satiety. The foundation-stone and the pillar, on which we build the fabric of our felicity, must be laid in our own hearts. Amusement, mirth, agreeable variety, and even improvement, may be sometimes sought in the gaiety of mixed company, and in the usual diversions of the world; but, if we found our general happiness on these, we shall do little more than raise castles in the air, or build houses on the sand.

To derive the proper pleasure and improvement from company, it ought to be select, and to consist of persons of character, respectable both for their morals and their understandings. Mixed and undistinguished society tends only to dissipate our ideas, and induce a laxity of principles and practice. The pleasure it affords is of a coarse, mixed, noisy, and rude kind. Indeed it commonly ends in weariness and disgust, as even they are ready to confess, who yet constantly pursue it, as if the chief good consisted in living in a crowd.

Among those, indeed, who are exempted by their circumstances from professional and official employments, and who professedly devote themselves to a life of pleasure, little else seems to constitute the idea of pleasure, but an unceasing succession of company, public or private. The dress, and other circumstances preparatory to the enjoyment of this pleasure, scarcely leave a moment for reflection. Day after day is spent in the same toilsome round, till a habit is formed, which renders dissipation necessary to existence. One week without it would probably induce a lowness of spirits, which might terminate in despair and suicide. When the mind has no anchor, it will suffer a kind of shipwreck; it will sink in whirlpools, and be dashed on rocks. What, indeed, is life or its enjoyments without settled principles, laudable purposes, mental exertions, and internal comfort? It is merely a vapour, or, to drop the language of figure on so serious a subject, it is a state worse than non-entity, since it possesses a restless power of action productive of nothing but misery.

I very seriously recommend, therefore, to all who wish to enjoy their existence (and who entertains not that wish?), that they should acquire not only a power of bearing, but of taking a pleasure in temporary solitude. Every one must, indeed, sometimes be alone. Let him not repine when he is alone, but learn to set a value on the golden moments. It is then that he is enabled to study himself and the world around him. It is then that he is led to see things as they are, and to remove the deceitful veil, which almost every thing assumes in the busy scene of worldly employments. The soul is enabled to retire into herself, and to exert those energies, which are always attended with sublime pleasure. She is enabled to see the dependent,

frail, and wretched state of man as the child of nature, and incited by her discovery to implore grace and protection from the Lord of the universe. They, indeed, who fly from solitude, can seldom be religious; for religion requires meditation. They may be said to live without God in the world; not, it is true, from atheistical principles, but from a carelessness of disposition; a truly deplorable state, the consciousness of which could not fail to cloud the gaiety of those halcyon beings, who sport in the sunshine of unremitted pleasure.

I may, I believe, assert, that the love of pleasure, the follies of fashion, and the extravagancies of dissipation, are greater enemies to religion, than all the writers who have endeavoured to attract notice by attacking the establishment. Many, it is to be feared, have lived and died in the regions of gaiety, without ever having felt a sense of religion. Prayers, sermons, churches, the clergy, and the gospel, were things which never struck them, and from which they received no more impression than a blind man from the exhibition of a pageant. To feel the fine sensibilities of devotion, it is necessary to commune with our own hearts, upon our beds, and to be still. If we had but courage to withdraw ourselves from the world, we should often find in our study, and on our knees, such pleasures as the world cannot give.

I may also add, that few will be found to display prudence or consistency of conduct, who do not sometimes step aside from the tumult of the throng, to consider coolly their circumstances and situation. Life cannot proceed fortuitously without incurring momentary danger. Plans of conduct must be formed, precautions taken, errors retrieved, and the probabilities of futurity considered. But all this requires thought, and thought, retirement.

Not only religion, virtue, and prudence, will be

promoted by occasional solitude, but a relish will be given to the rational enjoyments of a pleasurable life. Vicissitude is essential to every state of durable enjoyment. He who has spent a little part of his time in his closet, or in his groves, will partake of the gaieties of the assembly with fresh delight, as a man, when he is hungry, finds an additional flavour in his daily food. But it must be remembered, that, in recommending solitude, I mean only occasional solitude. There is no doubt but that man is made for action, and that his duties and pleasures are often most numerous and most important amidst the busy hum of men. Many vices, and many corrupt dispositions, have been fostered in a solitary life. Monkery is not favourable to human nature or human happiness; but neither is unlimited dissipation. Cautions and remedies must always be applied, where the greatest danger appears. And I think it will admit no dispute, but that, in this age and nation, men are much more likely to be injured by too constant an intercourse with the world, than by too much retirement.

But nothing without moderation is durable or wise. Let there be a sweet interchange of retirement and association, of repose and activity. A few hours spent every day by the votaries of pleasure in serious meditation, would render their pleasure pure, and more unmixed with misery. It would give them knowledge, so that they would see how far they might advance in their pursuit without danger; and resolution, so that they might retreat when danger approached. It would teach them how to live; a knowledge, which, indeed, they think they possess already; and it would also teach them, what they are often too little solicitous to learn, how to die.

No. XXXVIII. *Reflections on the Art of Physic.*

We cannot help feeling a pleasure, mixed indeed with severe regret, while we look back on the Antediluvian World, and read the fabulous accounts of a golden age. The absence of that natural evil, which has ever since infused into the cup of human felicity a bitter mixture, must have rendered existence an uninterrupted pleasure, and must have heightened every actual enjoyment, by admitting the comfortable reflection, that present indulgence was not to be paid for by future pain.

But, alas! the golden age existed only in the regions of poetry. Moral evil soon made its appearance in an animal so imperfect as man, and had an immediate tendency to produce natural. The gratification of the animal appetites was, for obvious reasons, connected with pleasure; and, in order to prolong or improve that pleasure, recourse was had to refinement and excess. These not only superinduced disease, but occasioned an imbecility, that rendered it more difficult to be removed.

Man, furnished by nature with a greater susceptibility of pleasure, than was indulged to other animals, was possessed likewise of a superior sagacity, which enabled him to modify and heighten his enjoyments with all the subtlety of art. His boasted reason became the pander of his appetite. A taste for simple food and simple manners, the one the best preservative of health, the other of innocence, was lost amid the acquired advantages of civilization.

The human body, even in the earliest ages, and before the universal prevalence of luxury, was indeed exposed to various diseases. Its complicated

organization rendered its motions easy to be retarded or obstructed by the unavoidable influence of an atmosphere. We find that animals, who approach nearly to a state of nature, are yet subject to a variety of distempers. The most useful auxiliary of man is known to labour under many violent disorders, though his food his a pure, vegetable production, presented to him in its highest perfection, and not adulterated by the hand of man. In the infancy of the world, it may reasonably be concluded from analogy, the body was produced in a stronger and sounder state, than after the lapse of many thousand ages, when vice has contaminated the very sources of population. Fresh from the hand of plastic nature, the body was not only more beautiful and proportionate, but less disposed to admit morbid commixtures, and better enabled to expel them. Yet even then, the effects of the weather, of accidents, of long fasting, or repletion, were necessarily felt, and were followed by disease.

Exposed to wants, to external dangers, and internal weaknesses, the impatient mind of man soon applied itself to the invention of arts, which taught compendious methods of supply, of defence, and of remedy. The use of iron once discovered, gave him the superiority of a more elevated order of beings over those to whom it continued unknown, and the dominion which he acquired over the brutes, exalted him still higher in the scale of dignity and power. But though labour was facilitated and security obtained, yet neither mechanical ingenuity, nor the protection gained by adventitious power, could allay the heat of a fever, or assuage the violence of pain; evils which attacked him in the hours of his repose, and found their way to him through the walls of the rampart or the castle.

The personal feelings of the sufferer, and the

anxiety of those who were most nearly allied to him by the ties of blood and affection, incited the spirit of industry and research to procure alleviation. Charms and amulets were the first expedients suggested to the rude mind of the barbarian, ever more inclined to indulge the delusive hopes of superstition, than to listen to the voice of sober reason. But even these expedients, inadequate as they appeared, were yet often productive of beneficial effects. Many disorders, if not quite imaginary, derived much of their violence from the force of imagination. From the same source their cure was to be obtained. A bead worn a certain time, an insignificant ceremony performed with the rituals of superstition, could not effect any immediate alteration in the animal œconomy; but they gave ease to the mind of the sufferer, and, by restoring cheerfulness and spirits, often became really efficacious.

Nor were these fanciful methods of cure confined to the ages of ignorance. They who are acquainted with vulgar life, as it appears at present, and the manners of those who reside at a distance from the capital, must have observed a variety of superstitious practices scarcely to be equalled in absurdity by the rudest nations. There are, for instance, many methods of curing an ague, without internal or external application. The poor patient has recourse to some aged matron, who, like the god of physic, professes the arts of medicine and prophecy; and he seeks not the aid of the regular practitioner, while he can obtain the supernatural assistance of a charm. He waits without reluctance for relief; the disorder decreases by the effects of time and constitutional vigour; the credit of the cure is given to the charm: he recommends it in his turn to others, and superstition prevails in an enlightened age, amid all the triumphs of truth and philosophy.

Medicine was however early cultivated as an art, founded on certain principles, and confided in by the sensible part of mankind as the most probable means of relief. The slaughter of victims for sacrifice, and of animals for food, gave an opportunity of inspecting the parts of organized bodies, which bore a great analogy to the human constitution. Chirurgery and physic derived from this source equal opportunities for improvement. Indeed, it is presumed, that chirurgical operations were the first efforts of the medical art. External maladies, as they were most visible, called more immediately for relief; and external application was the easiest and most obvious to reflection. Both branches of the art, long after its invention, were united in the same professor, as they usually are at present among our rural practitioners. There is indeed sufficient reason for their combination, since a skill in them must, in great measure, result from a knowledge of the same principles; yet, at the same time, each of them will probably be carried to a greater height, when separately pursued by different persons. This indeed seems to accord with the decisions of experience; for, of those who have arrived at singular eminence in either of these arts, few have chosen to invade the province of the other. Cheselden did not prescribe in a fever, nor did Radcliffe undertake an amputation.

The Greeks, whose happy polity was admirably adapted to call forth all those fine qualities of the mind with which they were singularly furnished by nature, advanced not only the ornamental arts of painting, poetry, and sculpture, to perfection, but cultivated the useful one of physic with a success, which has enabled the moderns to make their boasted improvements. The writings of Hippocrates, though, for obvious reasons, slighted by the busy practi-

tioner, are held in high estimation by the learned physician. And if the prescriptions of the Cöan seem to want simplicity, and fail of their effect at this period and in our climate; yet have they been of essential service to the art, by introducing what is called the dogmatical method in the place of the empirical; and their failure as remedies may be reasonably attributed to the alterations which the human frame is found to undergo in the revolution of ages, by a general change of dietetic regimen; by removing to different climates, and incorporating with races of men, who seem to be distinguished from the rest even in their bodily organization.

Though the writings of the antients, of the Grecian Hippocrates and Galen, and of the Arabian Rhazes and Avicenna, are often talked of by the modern professor, yet are they seldom read. Experience, which, after all, is the surest test of utility, seems to justify the neglect. Practical medicine is less indebted to books, than any other liberal art. The occasional varieties of distempers are infinite; their complications disguise them, and often produce a new species, or one that has never been described with accuracy. He who has recourse to systems, is at a stand when he sees a symptom unobserved before; but he who has studied nature in the original, knows how to change his intentions, and adapt endless remedies to the endless variety of disorders. Yet theory should certainly go before practice in the preparation for this profession; and the physician, who has not read a great deal in his youth, will appear not only illiberal but grossly ignorant.

For many similar instances, Radcliffe may be selected to prove, that great practical skill, as well as fame in this art, is attainable merely by the aid of experimental physiology. He indeed, it is said,

was a genius in medicine. To books he owed but little, and was ambitious to appear less indebted to them than he really was. He knew, it is true, that experience, the safest guide after the mind is prepared for her instructions by previous institution, is apt, without such preparation to degenerate to a vulgar and presumptuous empiricism. He therefore laid a foundation of general and liberal knowledge derived from books, on which he erected a noble superstructure, with materials supplied by observation. He certainly possessed, in an eminent degree, a sagacity which nature had bestowed. But he was not a man of profound and accurate science. Perhaps, like many of his profession, he owed a great part of his fame and fortune to the caprice of fashion, and the concurrence of favourable circumstances. If he did not, by his own discoveries, advance the boundaries of knowledge, he took the wisest methods for its improvement at his death, by the most ample benefactions to the University of Oxford. Through the wisdom of their application he still continues to promote the benevolent purposes of the medical profession, in a general infirmary, raised there by his posthumous bounty. Science gratefully attributes to the same source, a library and observatory, happily placed in a centrical situation, whence the streams of knowledge, like the blood circulating from the heart, are generally diffused. Oxford has indeed been long in possession of advantages favourable to the study of theoretic physic, but scarcely afforded any oppportunities for practical information, till the erection of the Radclivian infirmary. And now, since the clinical lecture is established in it, the students will no longer be constrained to seek improvement in the Hospitals of the capital, or at a remote University.

Academical honours are conferred on this pro-

fession, and it commonly leads to wealth and popular esteem; but it was not so honourable among the Romans as among us, and all the modern nations of Europe. It was commonly in the hands of slaves, and Antonius Musa is almost the only physician in the golden age of learning who is mentioned with respect. It now possesses the rank and esteem which it deserves. Our physicians have usually united polite learning with physiological knowledge. Many besides Linacre, Mead, Freind, and Akenside, have been no less celebrated in the schools of humanity than of science, and have been favoured by Apollo as much in their poetical as in their medical capacity.

Harvey, from whom is derived one of the noblest discoveries of modern philosophy, has greatly contributed to promote the cultivation of polite literature, together with the skill peculiar to the profession. By instituting an annual Latin oration, he has rendered a knowledge of the elegance of that language necessary to those of the faculty, who are desirous of being distinguished as men of taste. As it might fall to the lot of any individual to speak on the occasion, each has been solicitous of retaining that classical learning, which is too often forgotten, even by men of sense and judgment, soon after their emancipation from scholastic restraint. In pursuit of this end, they have formed a taste for classical works, and have been the patrons, the admirers, and the composers of the most elegant productions. Indeed, in no order are there to be found individuals better informed, more polite, humane, ingenious, than among the regularly-bred physicians.

At the same time it is but just to add, that there are great numbers, and some among them not unpopular, who are distinguished only by superior

avarice, impudence, folly, ignorance, and affectation; by qualities, which, though they can hardly fail to render them fashionable, are in themselves effeminate and despicable in the extreme.

It must be confessed, that many of those, whose business it is to combine and administer medicines according to the prescription of others, have, by the benefit of long observation, acquired real skill; and, though they have not to boast the advantage of a very liberal education, are yet justly esteemed as experimental physicians. These constitute a very numerous class in the community, and as they are commonly appealed to in the first instance, and entirely depended upon by the middle and inferior ranks, their medical influence is, on the whole, more extensive than that of those who hold a higher place in the national estimation.

When we turn our attention to the lowest order of practitioners, empirics and pretenders, we see this noble art most disgracefully perverted. It is indeed much to be lamented, that the inferior and more numerous classes of mankind, who are most exposed to accidents, and who have the fewest alleviations, are constrained by indigence to seek relief from men, who have no other preparation for the exercise of this important art, but the humble employment of macerating drugs in a mortar, tying labels to the necks of phials, conveying medicines to patients, sweeping a warehouse, or kindling the fires of a laboratory. Such are often the most daring in the treatment of maladies, for ignorance is naturally presumptuous. Charity has however stept in to remedy the evil; and numerous hospitals scattered over the face of our country, have at once afforded an extensive field for the exertion of beneficence, and the best schools for the improvement of medicine. In these places, skilful physi-

cians preside, and the poor have the advantage of regular attendance, of fresh and unadulterated medicines, of proper diet and cleanliness, in a manner highly favourable to cure, and which can hardly be surpassed by the conveniences of opulence.

Like the pretenders to inspiration in religion, there are many who boldly enter on the practice of this art, totally destitute of preparatory instruction, and who make a merit of their defect. Without even those few lights, which may be occasionally obtained in the course of a servile apprenticeship, they assume all the importance of sufficiency, and dictate with an oracular confidence. Against these vultures of mankind, against these harpies of society, who scatter pain and death around, under pretence of affording relief; and who, for the sake of supporting an unbecoming parade in life, not only delude, but destroy those who apply to them as to friends, under the pressure of the heaviest calamities, every honest mind must feel an indignant sentiment. The loss occasioned by the deceiver, who preys on the possessions of his fellow-creatures, may be repaired by subsequent industry or good fortune; but deception, in this instance, is usually followed by destruction.

But how shall an evil thus generally felt and complained of, be obviated, without an infringement of civil liberty; that boasted privilege, of which we are sometimes more jealously tenacious than of health and life? Admonition is ineffectual; for of those who suffer, few have not been apprized of the danger of trusting to empiricism.

The progress of empirical fame and success is easily traced, though not easily retarded. A powerful medicine is exhibited to some wretched individual, whose indigence induces him to be grateful for the notice and assistance of the ignorant. If

his complaint is removed, as it would otherwise have been by the silent operation of time, he is triumphantly dragged forth to public view, and his name is added to attest the wonderful efficacy of the pretender's nostrum. The regular practitioner is insulted. Facts speak for themselves, and even men of sense hear and believe. The gaping crowd press round the mountebank, and swallow the dose of death with avidity, led on by the sunshine of delusive hope, like the poor fluttering insect, that is allured to its own destruction by a deceitful blaze.

The wisdom and authority of the legislature might, indeed, lessen or remove the evil. But it has never yet interfered, not only from an unwillingness to multiply restraints in a free country, but perhaps from a doubt whether some equivalent advantage may not arise from the liberty of attempting medical experiments. It is a truth somewhat mortifying to the regular votaries of science, that many of the most important discoveries have been made by the ignorant and by chance. Those who have been taught to adhere to systems are sometimes too much attached to the straight and known path, to permit themselves to venture even on proper deviation. While the uneducated experimentalist, a stranger to the prepossessions unavoidably derived from learning, is almost sure to acquire the merit of originality. Unacquainted with the paths of those who have gone before, he is under a necessity of pursuing a track of his own. He is commonly bewildered, it is true, but yet it sometimes happens, that he finds out a shorter or more agreeable road. In the infinite trials which his boldness instigates him to make, he blunders on a useful discovery, which would never have been known to the more expert and cautious. Unfortunate individuals suffer in the course of his inquiries, but the community at large is

sometimes benefited by an accession to experimental knowledge.

In no profession is it more desirable, that there should be examinations previous to a licence to practise. The want of a strict examination will render a profession low and contemptible which was once highly honoured.

It was indeed natural that medicine should be highly honoured, and its first inventors or improvers exalted to gods and demigods. As life itself is of small value without health, no wonder the restorers of health were ranked among the bestowers of life. The profession has always obtained a higher rank in the scale of civil subordination, except, indeed, among the Romans. In this instance the moderns act the more wisely, if there is truth in the maxim, that honour is the nurse of arts.

It is however greatly to be regretted, that popular esteem is often misplaced, and rather tends to encourage bold, presumptuous, and unblushing ignorance, than to raise merit from the vale of obscurity. Fashion, it is allowed, has contributed more to the establishment of many celebrated physicians, than any superiority of knowledge that they possessed. This popularity, however, has sometimes been the cause of that merit, of which it ought to have been the effect. It has given men of moderate abilities and attainments, such numerous and extensive opportunities of improving by experience, as could not be obtained by the able, yet unemployed.

Fashion may be allowed to rule with absolute sway in her proper province, in the *mundus muliebris;* but let her not dictate in matters so important as the means of restoring health. Among physicians of integrity and liberal education, let her select whom she pleases; but let her not set aside

the votary of science and philosophy, to ask the advice of the needy, the illiterate, the bold empiric.

No. XXXIX. *On the Means of rendering Old Age Honourable and Comfortable.*

It is a melancholy consideration that man, as he advances in life, degenerates in his nature, and gradually loses those tender feelings, which constitute one of his highest excellencies. The tear of sensibility, said Juvenal, is the most honourable characteristic of humanity.

Whatever real pain may sometimes be occasioned by sensibility, is in general counterbalanced by agreeable sensations, which are not the less sincere and soothing, because they do not excite the joy of thoughtless merriment. The anguish of the sympathetic heart is keen, but no less exalted are its gratifications. Notwithstanding all that has been said on the happiness of a phlegmatic disposition, every one who has formed a true estimate of things will deprecate it as a curse that degrades his nature. It is the negative happiness of the dullest of quadrupeds doomed to the vilest drudgery. Who would wish to be a Bœotian whose lot had fallen in Attica?

Wretched however as is the state when the heart ceases to feel the quick vibrations of love and pity, we are all hastening to it by that law of our nature, which obliges us, when arrived at a certain point of perfection, to recede with retrograde rapidity from

all that gave us the power of pleasing or receiving pleasure. But if old age were attended only with the deprivation of amiable qualities, the loss of sensibility might often be esteemed a happiness to the individual, as it would prevent him from feeling one of the greatest of natural and undeserved calamities. But the truth is, the absence of all that is lovely is sometimes supplied by all that is odious; as in the season of winter, the verdure and music of the forest are not only no more, but are succeeded by the howling of the blast, and the dreary prospect of nakedness and horror. Old age, though dead to many pleasing sensations, is still most feelingly alive to pain.

Of these evils part is derived from nature, and is inevitable, and part from an erroneous conduct, which may be regulated by reason and philosophy.

When the body becomes debilitated by age, languor or pain must necessarily ensue. Bodily infirmities gradually impair the strength of the mind. Uneasy sensations, continued for a long time, sour the native sweetness of the temper. And the peevishness, the moroseness, and the severity which characterize the last stage of life, however disgustful, are to be palliated, and no more deserve to be censured as voluntary faults, than the aching of the joints. They are the natural result of mental pain, and follow from a wounded mind, no less spontaneously or unavoidably, than blood gushes from the incision of an artery. They disturb tranquillity, and poison convivial enjoyment; but they ought to be patiently borne with, if not from motives of humanity, yet from the consideration, that the day is not far distant, when we shall stand in need of the same indulgence. And we may hereafter experimentally know how cutting to the heart are the impatient reproaches of those, who are bound by

the ties of conjugal, filial, and domestic duty, to sooth us under the pressure of calamity, and, as the pious poet expresses it, to rock the cradle of declining age.

But experience proves, that old age is not always attended with natural infirmity. Original strength of constitution, or habitual temperance, often produce a green old age. In this case, the odious qualities usually attributed to that period are without excuse. Proportionate improvement should be the effect of long observation and experience. The vice of avarice, the characteristic distinction of the last stage of life, is then more than ever unreasonable. It is no less absurd, as it has often been said, than to provide a greater quantity of stores, the nearer the voyage approaches to its conclusion. It is also the source of every other detestable disposition. It habituates the heart to suffer the sight of woe without commiseration; because pity prompts to relieve, and relief is attended with expense. Hardness of heart, like all its other tendencies, is increased by voluntary indulgence, and he who has long disregarded the happiness or misery of those who were allied to him by the common tie of humanity, will soon become unkind among his nearer connexions, cruel to his family and friends, and more cruel to himself.

Another disposition, which causes the old man to be avoided by those who are most capable of affording him amusement, is, an unreasonable austerity of manners. A stranger to the feelings of youth, and forgetful that he once was young, he judges even the innocent sallies of lively spirits, and a warm heart, by the severest dictates of rigid prudence. His judgment, however, he finds is little attended to by those, who are addressed on all sides by a more alluring voice. He becomes impatient and

querulous. He condemns every thing that is produced in the present times, and extols the fashions, the diversions, the dress, the manners, the learning, the taste, that prevailed in the days of his youth, and which appeared to him superior to those of the present times solely because his powers of perception were then more lively and acute; the very reason why the present appear with such irresistible charms in the eyes of his grandson.

For the natural evils of old age, relief is to be sought from the physician rather than the moralist. But philosophy can assuage the pain which it cannot cure. It can suggest reflections, which operate like balsam on the wounds of the mind. It can teach us to bear those evils which it cannot remove, and, by calling forth our powers of resistance, enable us to alleviate the load.

All, however, are not capable of receiving the benefits of philosophy. Few but those whose understandings have been cultivated, and affections refined by liberal education, are able to understand or profit by the wise precepts of an Epictetus or a Cicero. Of still greater efficacy than the philosophy of these or any other writers, religion steps in to infuse an ingredient into the bitter cup of life, which never fails to sweeten it, and which is adapted to the taste of every human creature.

Religion, indeed, is able of itself most effectually to dissipate the clouds, and to diffuse a sunshine on the evening of life. But to those who are conversant in literature, the celebrated treatise of Cicero may be collaterally recommended as affording solid consolation. Many moral treatises, however just and pleasing they may appear on the perusal, are of little use in the conduct of life, and terminate in speculative amusement. But the Treatise on Old Age prescribes rules, and suggests ideas, which, if

permitted to influence practice, must render that period of life truly pleasing and honourable. Every old man, who wishes to be wise and happy, and consequently an object of respect, should turn it over, as Horace advises the student to peruse the Greek volumes, by day and night. Nor can an ignorance of the Latin language be pleaded in excuse for the omission, since the elegant translation of Melmoth has preserved all the meaning of the original, together with a great share of its grace and spirit.

The indigent and the uninstructed cannot enjoy the additional benefit of pagan wisdom; but they have the comfort to know, that evangelical philosophy is fully adequate to the cure of mental disease, and at the same time requires neither extraordinary abilities, nor the opportunities of learned leisure, nor the toil of study. An attendance upon the offices of religion, and on the duties of charity, at the same time that it fills up the vacant hours of superannuated life, with that cheerfulness which ever attends laudable employment, tends to inspire ideas of patience and resignation. A devotional taste or spirit will afford the most lively enjoyments. The turbulent pleasures of youth may be succeeded by a religious fervour; by a flame which is capable of warming the cold blood of age, and of affording satisfactions similar to those of more youthful passions, without their danger or criminality.

Thus may the dignity of age be supported. And upon its dignity greatly depends its happiness. It is that alone which can repel the insolence of youth, too often instigated by the levity of thoughtless health, to forget the reverence which among the ancients was thought due to the hoary head. It is really lamentable to observe in many families, the aged parent slighted and neglected, and like an

old-fashioned piece of furniture, or useless lumber, thrown aside with contempt. Such treatment is disgustingly unnatural; but it not easily to be avoided where there is no personal merit, no authority derived from superior wisdom to compensate the want of attractive qualities. Tenderness and affection may be patient and assiduous; but who would not rather command the attention of respect, than excite the aid of pity? For the sake, however, of domestic happiness, it should be remembered, that the authoritative air of wisdom must be tempered with a sweetness of manners; and it will be found, that the reverence which does not exclude love, is the most desirable.

To preserve the sensibility of youth at an advanced period is difficult; because reason and philosophy, it is to be feared, can contribute little to its continuance. The loss of it is a natural consequence of decay. Much of the milk of human kindness, as it is often called, flows from a fine contexture of the nerves; a contexture which is broken, and a subtilty which is destroyed by duration.

Excess, however, precipitates the effects of time. Temperance in youth, together with the other advantages of that happy period, will protract its sensibility. And among the many arguments for early wisdom, this must have great weight, that wisdom in youth is usually followed by happiness in age.

Perhaps nothing may contribute more to prolong the amiable dispositions of youth, than the retaining of a taste for its innocent amusements. We often grow old in our sentiments, before we are stricken in years. We accustom ourselves to melancholy ideas of gradual decay, and before we are incapacitated for enjoyment, renounce the satisfaction which we might partake. Pleasurable ideas, no less than painful, are caught by sympathy. He who frequents

the circles of youth and cheerfulness, will find himself involuntarily inspired with gaiety; he will for a while forget his cares; his wrinkles will be smoothed and his heart dilated. And though he will not experience the effect of Medea's caldron in the renovation of his body, he will feel his mind, in a great measure, restored to its former vigour and activity.

The books we read in age will have a great influence on the temper, as well as on the conduct and the understanding. After a certain period, many of us, from motives of mistaken propriety, close our books of entertainment, and peruse nothing but those serious treatises, which, though proper at certain times, yet, when perused without variety, induce a settled melancholy, rather than a principled wisdom. Why should the imagination, that fertile source of all that is delightful, be left uncultivated at a time when pleasures become most deficient? Why should the works of a Horace, a Virgil, a Homer, be laid aside for the meditations of a Seneca and Antoninus? The judicious mixture of books addressed to the fancy, with those which enlighten the understanding, would increase the effect of both, at the same time that it would contribute to health and happiness by affording lively pleasure.

Horace wished that he might not spend his old age without his lyre. Music is, indeed, a sweet companion in every stage of life, but to the last it is peculiarly adapted. It furnishes employment without painful exertion, and, while it charms the sense, sooths the heart.

No. XL. *On the Happiness of Domestic Life.*

An active life is exposed to many evils, which cannot reach a state of retirement; but it is found, by the uniform experience of mankind, to be, upon the whole, productive of the most happiness. All are found desirous of avoiding the listlessness of an unemployed condition. Without the incentives of ambition, of fame, of interest, of emulation, men eagerly rush upon hazardous and painful enterprises. There is a quick succession of ideas, a warm flow of spirits, an animated sensation, consequent on exertion, which amply compensates the chagrin of disappointment, and the fatigue of attention.

One of the most useful effects of action is, that it renders repose agreeable. Perpetual rest is pain of the most intolerable kind. But a judicious interchange of rest and motion, of indolent enjoyment and strenuous efforts, gives a true relish of life; which, when too tranquil, is insipid, and when too much agitated, disgustful.

This sweet repose, which is necessary to restore, by relaxing the tone of the weary mind, has been sought for by the wisest and greatest of men at their own fire-side. Senators and heroes have shut out the acclamations of an applauding world, to enjoy the prattling of their little ones, and to partake the endearments of family conversation. They knew that even their best friends, in the common intercourse of life, were in some degree actuated by interested motives in displaying their affection; that many of their followers applauded them in hopes of reward; and that the giddy multitude, however zealous, were not always judicious in their approba-

tion. But the attentions paid them at their fire-side, the smiles which exhilarated their own table, were the genuine result of undissembled love.

The nursery has often alleviated the fatigues of the bar and the senate-house. Nothing contributes more to raise the gently-pleasing emotions, than the view of infant innocence, enjoying the raptures of a game at play. All the sentiments of uncontrolled nature display themselves to the view, and furnish matter for agreeable reflection to the mind of the philosophical observer. To partake with children in their little pleasures, is by no means unmanly. It is one of the purest sources of mirth. It has an influence in amending the heart, which necessarily takes a tincture from the company that surrounds us. Innocence as well as guilt is communicated and increased by the contagion of example. And the great author of evangelical philosophy has taught us to emulate the simplicity of the infantine age. He seems indeed himself to have been delighted with young children, and found in them what he in vain sought among those who judged themselves their superiors, unpolluted purity of heart.

Among the great variety of pictures, which the vivid imagination of Homer has displayed throughout the Iliad, there is not one more pleasing than the family-piece, which represents the parting interview between Hector and Andromache. It deeply interests the heart, while it delights the imagination. The hero ceases to be terrible, that he may become amiable. We admire him while he stands completely armed in the field of battle; but we love him more while he is taking off his helmet, that he may not frighten his little boy with its nodding plumes. We are refeshed with the tender scene of domestic love, while all around breathes

rage and discord. We are pleased to see the arm, which is shortly to deal death and destruction among a host of foes, employed in caressing an infant son with the embraces of paternal love. A professed critic would attribute the pleasing effect entirely to contrast; but the heart has declared, previously to the inquiries of criticism, that it is chiefly derived from the satisfaction, which we naturally take in beholding great characters engaged in tender and amiable employments.

But, after all that is said of the purity and the solidity of domestic pleasures, they unfortunately appear, to a great part of mankind, insipid, unmanly, and capable of satisfying none but the weak, the spiritless, the inexperienced, and the effeminate. The pretenders to wit and modern philosophy are often found to renounce the received opinions of prudential conduct; and while they affect a superior liberality, to regulate their lives by the most selfish principles. Whatever appears to have little tendency to promote personal pleasure and advantage, they leave to be performed by those simple individuals, who are dull enough, as they say, to pursue the journey of life by the straight road of common sense. It is true, they will allow, that the world must be replenished by a perpetual succession, and it is no less true, that an offspring, once introduced into the world, requires all the care of painful attention. But let the task be reserved for meaner spirits. If the passions can be gratified without the painful consequences of supporting a family, they eagerly seize the indulgence. But the toil of education they leave to those whom they deem fools enough to take a pleasure in it. There will always be a sufficient number, say they, whose folly will lead them, for the sake of a silly passion, called virtuous love, to engage in a life of perpetual

anxiety. The fool's paradise, they add with a jeer, will never be deserted.

Presumptuous as are all such pretenders to newly-invented systems of life and conduct, it is not to be supposed they will think themselves superior to Cicero. Yet Cicero, with all his liberality of mind, felt the tenderness of conjugal and paternal attachment, and acknowledged that, at one time, he received no satisfaction in any company but that of his wife, his little daughter, and, to use his own epithet, his HONIED young Cicero. The great Sir Thomas More, whom nobody will suspect of narrowness of mind, who by a very singular treatise evinced, that he was capable of thinking and of choosing for himself, has left it on record, that he devoted a great share of his time, from the united motives of duty and delight, to the amusement of his children.

It will be objected by those, who pretend to have formed their ideas of life from actual observation, that domestic happiness, however pleasing in description, like many a poetic dream, is but an alluring picture, designed by a good heart, and painted in glowing colours by a lively fancy. The constant company, they urge, even of those we love, occasions an insipidity. Insipidity grows into disgust. Disgust, long continued, sours the temper. Peevishness is the natural consequence. The domestic circle becomes the scene of dispute. Mutual antipathy is ingenious in devising mutual torment. Sullen silence or malignant remarks fill up every hour, till the arrival of a stranger causes a temporary restraint, and excites that good humour which ought to be displayed among those, whom the bonds of affection and blood have already united.

Experience, indeed, proves that these remarks are sometimes verified. But that there is much

domestic misery, is no argument that there is no domestic happiness, or that the misery may not be removed.

Natural stupidity, natural ill-temper, acquired ill-habits, want of education, illiberal manners, and a neglect of the common rules of discretion, will render every species of intercourse disagreeable. When those are united by connubial ties, who were separated by natural and inherent diversity, no wonder if that degree of happiness, which can only result from a proper union, is unknown. In the forced alliance, which the poet of Venusium mentions, of the serpent with the dove, of the tyger with the lamb, there can be no love. When we expatiate on the happiness of the domestic groupe, we presuppose that all who compose it are originally assimilated by affection, and are still kept in union by discreet friendship. Where this is not the case, the censure must fall on the discordant disposition of the parties, and not on the essential nature of family intercourse.

To form, under the direction of prudence, and by the impulse of virtuous love, an early conjugal attachment, is one of the best securities of virtue, as well as the most probable means of happiness. The duties, which are powerfully called forth by the relations of husband and father, are of that tender kind which inspires goodness and humanity. He who beholds a woman whom he loves, and an helpless infant looking up to him for support, will not easily be induced to indulge in unbecoming extravagance, or devote himself to indolence. He who has a rising family to introduce into a vicious world, will be cautious of setting a bad example, the contagion of which, when it proceeds from parental authority, must be irresistibly malignant. Thus many who, in their individual and unconnected state,

would probably have spent a life not only useless to others, but profligate and careless in itself, have become valuable members of the community, and have arrived at a degree of moral improvement, to which they would not otherwise have attained.

The contempt in which domestic pleasures have in modern times been held, is a mark of profligacy. It is also a proof of a prevailing ignorance of real enjoyment. It argues a defect in taste and judgment, as well as in morals. For the general voice of the experienced has in all ages declared, that the truest happiness is to be found at home.

No. XLI. *On the Ill Effects of Ridicule, when employed as a Test of Truth in Private and Common Life.*

HORACE once happened to say with an air of levity, that ridicule was more efficacious in deciding disputes of importance, than all the severity of argument. Shaftesbury caught the idea, improved upon it, and advanced the doctrine, that ridicule is the test of truth. All those who possessed one characteristic of man, in great perfection, RISIBILITY, but who were slenderly furnished with the other, rationality, adopted the opinion with eagerness; for though to reason was difficult, to laugh was easy.

The admirers of the graces were glad of so pleasing a method of philosophizing, and seized on it without examination. They who admitted it, were under a necessity of smiling; and to smile, if

not to laugh, was allowed to be graceful by the great legislator of decorum.

The speculative opinions of studious men, however erroneous, often afford them innocent amusement in their closets, without diffusing any malignant influence on the manners or happiness of others. However interesting to the philosopher may be the disputes concerning liberty and necessity, or the nature of good and evil, they attract not the regard of those who are agitated in the busy walk of life, by the common pursuits of interest and pleasure. The metaphysician thinks his labours of great importance to the happiness of mankind, and would be not a little mortified to find, that in the great numbers who compose the community to which he belongs, and for whose more immediate edification he consumes the midnight oil, a very small part knows that there ever existed such men as Berkeley or Hume; and that, if they knew, and could understand their works, they would prefer the opportunity of earning a penny, or enjoying a good dinner, to all the advantage that ever could be derived from a conviction that matter existed not, or that the old principles of morals were erroneous.

But though this may be true of those doctrinal opinions, which are too abstracted for vulgar apprehension, yet it will be found, that there are speculative notions, which, as they require no great improvement of understanding to be comprehended, are adopted as axioms as soon as proposed, and permitted to influence the conduct of life. He who is a convert to materialism, a doctrine of late unhappily recommended by virtuous and well-meaning writers, will certainly lose some restraints which operated favourably on his morals. It is true, the writer who thus gives it all the recommendation his subtlety can supply, though he speaks

the dictates of conviction, is perhaps not apparently corrupted. But a reasonable cause may be assigned for his escaping the effect of the poison which he bears about him. He is probably a man of letters; leads a life remote from violent temptations; has acquired habits of virtue; and, perhaps, from the practice of reasoning and disputation, can maintain or explode opinions, which concern the most important interests of his fellow-creatures, with all the indifference of a by-stander. But his opinions are plausibly supported; they are pleasing to the lover of novelty; they afford solid consolation to the vicious, and they are read by those who want a sanction for flagitious conduct, who wish to be furnished with arguments to make proselytes to vice, and who are desirous of silencing the voice of conscience even by the fallacies of sophistry. They are read by the young and the gay, as a system of philosophy newly discovered, which far surpasses the antiquated doctrines of the received moralist, and as favourable to those ideas, which they gladly embrace on the expediency of unlimited indulgence.

That ridicule is an infallible criterion of truth, is an opinion, from its peculiar correspondency to the taste of the greater part of mankind, much more prevalent, and therefore more detrimental in the common intercourse of life.

Men destitute of delicacy, and that solid merit which is usually accompanied with diffidence, often rise to the highest eminence, acquire the largest fortunes, fill the most important offices, and give law to the sentiments as well as practice of others. These, judging from themselves, have no adequate idea of the dignity of human nature, and the comparative perfection of which it is capable. They perhaps have been uniformly vicious, yet have had the tem-

poral reward of virtue; they have been ignorant, yet have been admired for their wisdom; they have despised all the precepts of moral philosophy, and by dint of that effrontery which natural want of feeling inspires, have raised themselves to fame and fortune. Bold through the natural presumption of ignorance, and still farther elated by success, by the flattery, by the attentions which are paid to the most undeserving prosperity, they learn to laugh at all the serious part of the world, who are defrauding their genius, as it is called, in the rigid servitude of a fanciful virtue.

No wonder then that ridicule prevails in the lower orders; for rank, fortune, and spirit, without the least portion of learning and philosophy, are at any time able to raise a multitude of admirers, and to establish a fashion. When men, with very few other recommendations than the absence of modesty, become the leaders of a nation, a taste for RIDICULE, or, in other words, a malicious desire of levelling the exaltation of indigent virtue to the standard of worthless grandeur, will become general among all ranks. This taste, which tends to vilify all that can adorn and enoble a human creature, has been too common in every long established and corrupted community. He must have remarked but little, who has not seen its baneful influence in our own times and country. All the cardinal virtues, if the efforts of certain gross spirits could prevail, would be laughed out of countenance, and no semblance of them be left amongst us but the unsubstantial and imitating phantom, MODERN HONOUR.

Let us trace the progress of some ingenuous youth, emerging from an uncorrupted seminary to his station in the active world. In the retirements of study, he has formed advantageous ideas of that

life, on which he is now to enter. His heart glows with virtuous and benevolent purposes. He has been reading of those legislators, heroes, philosophers, patriots, who shine with lustre in the page of history, and who derived all their splendor from their virtue. He longs to emulate them. He values himself little on his birth or fortune, if he has them, but owns he feels a conscious dignity arising from his acquirements, his learning, his comprehensive views, his liberal and disinterested intentions. He loves fame, and hopes to acquire by deserving it.

Thus principled, suppose him introduced, where his fortune leads him, among some of the ancient nobles of the land; the hereditary or the elected lawgivers of his country, assembled at their usual places of resort, a cockpit, a horse-race, a chocolate-house, or a watering-place. He is struck dumb with astonishment. He finds he has hitherto dwelt on fairy ground, where all was enchantment. The fancied scene is vanished. He feels himself awkward. His accomplishments are either not understood, not valued, or have no opportunities of display. At first he is coldly neglected; and, at last, when personal acquaintance has taken place, he is considered as a novice, greatly to be pitied for his simplicity, but who may improve in time. Some kind instructor undertakes the office, and employs RIDICULE, as the most efficacious method of succeeding in it. He finds it necessary to submit to such initiation, before he can be admitted upon equal terms. He yields, though not without a sigh of regret, to think that he must divest himself of all those sentiments, which he once hoped would raise him to the rank of the worthies, whom he admired in books, and cannot help lamenting that he must study degeneracy. Self-abasement is an easy task. He descends from the invidious height of virtue,

and is received with pleasure by his relenting companions. In his turn, he learns to despise what he once admired, and contributes by his advice and example to strengthen the formidable phalanx of envious deriders. He becomes indeed what is commonly called a wit, that is, a joker, a buffoon, a satirist, a mere man of the world, and perhaps is really so much degraded by contagion, as to judge these characters more valuable than that of the scholar, the good man, and the philosopher. He is no longer the man of virtue, but he is the man of fashion, which he is taught to deem a nobler distinction.

All the useful and amiable qualities, which sweeten private and domestic life, have occasionally been put out of countenance by the prevalence of the doctrine, that ridicule is the test of truth in common life. Conjugal attachment and fidelity, filial regard, regular industry, prudent œconomy, sincerity in friendship, delicate scruples, benevolence and beneficence have been destroyed by the pretender to wit, who, from the malignant feelings of envy, has been prompted to bestow on them some ridiculous appellation.

The effect of ridicule cannot but be powerful among the young and inexperienced. It is a remark often made, that the man is found to degenerate from the excellence which distinguished him when a boy. In the walks of literary life, instances are frequent of those who, though they were the boast of their school, appear with no superiority of merit, when they are advanced to higher seminaries, or introduced into the world. To ridicule, for the most part, they owe their degradation. Their preeminence excites the envy of their contemporaries, who naturally endeavour to obscure that lustre, which burns them with its blaze. They at first

value themselves on those talents or acquisitions, of the worth of which their companions have no adequate conception. They are received at their college with contempt. Their remarks are attended to with a sneer, and their solemnity, as a decent deportment is called, becomes the subject of perpetual laughter. A nickname, the usual production of envy, is appropriated to them. They are shunned, as involving their companions in their own absurdity and consequent disgrace. This last is more than they can bear. They lay aside the appearance of virtuous emulation, and the reality soon follows. They studiously unlearn all that rendered them truly valuable; and, when they have debased themselves to a certain pitch, they are received with open arms, and are united with their company by the strong assimilation of congenial natures.

Genius, virtue, learning, are often distinguished by a delicacy of mind, which wears the appearance and produces the effects of infirmity. They are easily over-ruled, if not convinced, by the noisy antagonist, who makes up in clamour what he wants in argument, and gains the victory by dint of leathern lungs and nerves of iron. A horse-laugh set up by a circle of fox-hunters, would overpower the best poet or philosopher whom the world ever admired. The modest Virgil could not stand the attacks of scoffing ridicule; and wisdom has ever sought the shade, where the impertinence of the great or little vulgar seldom intruded. Cruel as it is to distress sensibility, and injurious to mankind to render worth contemptible, we often observe persons of character joining in the laugh against modesty and merit. In the moment of social enjoyment, we do not give ourselves time to reflect on the consequence of our mirth; and, perhaps, with kind intentions of promoting convivial happi-

ness, we often hurt the feelings and interests of individuals, as well as the most important ends of society.

From the desire of furnishing matter for conversation and supporting its vivacity, some evils arise, which at first view appear to proceed from malignant causes. The tale of scandal, though usually supposed to be the genuine effect of malevolence, is often produced by thoughtless levity, and an unwillingness to sit in company without supplying a share of entertainment. The raillery, which is sometimes played off with success by the shallowest yet boldest of the company, against persons of real merit, is not always the result of a detracting spirit, but of a fondness for coarse mirth, and an inability to let slip those opportunities for indulging it, which genius and learning, from an inattention to trifling accomplishments, are frequently thought to supply.

To be cheerful is indispensably necessary to the mutual participation of the pleasures of local intercourse. To be merry, if it is often desirable, is not always necessary. Let mirth however be uncontrolled, while it is tempered with the wisdom not to hurt those who deserve caresses and reward; and not to sully the dignity and wound the feelings of unaffected virtue by the wanton sallies of buffoonery.

Before I leave this subject, I would willingly obviate one error. Great laughers are usually called good-natured. I believe they are often particularly proud and malicious; for there is no method of gratifying pride and malice more effectually than by ridicule.

No. XLII. *On the Ill Effects of Proving by Argument Truths already admitted. In a Letter.*

SIR;

I HAVE reason to think, that I inherited from nature a plain understanding, without any pretensions to the vivacity of genius. I am grateful to my parents, that it was cultivated in that common way which guides through the beaten path of life, and leads not to those eccentricities, which, for the most part, terminate in misery.

I was destined to a mercantile life, and my education was therefore confined to writing, arithmetic, and a little elementary Latin acquired at the grammar-school. With my steadiness of conduct, there was little difficulty in acquiring a competency in the trade in which I was settled by my father. As I had no family, and was free from avarice and ambition, I retired early from the smoke and hurry of the town to a sweet little house and garden on the borders of Epping-forest.

A state of total inaction both of body and mind, I found less tolerable than the constant bustle of a town life. To my garden I had recourse for exercise. For rural sports I was unqualified, as I had never fired a gun nor mounted a horse. My garden, however, amused me sufficiently, contributed to confirm my health, and, at the same time, induced a contemplative turn. This led me to seek, in books, a supply for the loss of that succession of objects, which had so long solicited and engrossed my attention in the great streets of the capital.

The particular course of reading into which I unfortunately fell, might have proved hurtful, had

I not been discreet enough to correct its tendency in time. At best, it only served to fill up those hours, which might, indeed, have been more agreeably and more usefully employed.

I had received all the notions usually instilled by parental authority, with implicit belief. I was told that there was one God, and I believed it, for I saw his works around me. I embraced revealed religion in all its parts, with the same evidence of conviction with which I believed the sun to exist in the heavens, when I beheld its radiance, and felt its warmth. I saw and believed the difference between right and wrong, vice and virtue, justice and injustice, as strongly as the difference between black and white, and sweet and bitter. I never dreamt of calling in question the authenticity of the scriptural writers, the doctrine of the trinity, the divinity of our Saviour, the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, and the resurrection of the body. When I repeated the creed, I spoke with the same confidence of undoubting conviction, as when I asserted the truth of a fact, of which I had ocular demonstration. The steady light of common sense, together with parental authority, had hitherto guided me, and I had been humble enough to follow its directions.

It was now at last that I perceived the first shadow of a doubt on these subjects, and it was caused by the following circumstances. In collecting my little library, I often met with books entitled Proofs and Demonstrations of those important points, on which I entertained not a single idea of uncertainty; but I was now naturally led to conclude, that those things were not indisputably evident, of which so many laboured proofs were continually offered to the public notice. My curiosity was raised, and I began to suspect, that it was owing to my simpli-

city alone that I had hitherto received, without proof, all those doctrines, of which the world seemed to require the most powerful defence, and confirmations infinitely repeated.

The bear appearance of an attempt to prove opinions which I had ever considered as wanting no other proof than the first strong decisions of common sense, shook the stability of my conviction. Hitherto my days had been tranquil and secure. All my principles in morality and religion had been planted in infancy, and had taken root deep and strong. My understanding had not been actively ingenious enough to overturn those systems of my forefathers, which had led them through the ways of piety to peace. But I now found my happiness begin to totter, as my principles began to be undermined.

In the books which were every day offered for the conversion of sceptics, for refuting athcists, for proving christianity, for demonstrating that there is a difference betwcen good and evil, for asserting, that there is some essential superiority in the human nature over the animal, I found no remedy in my unsettled state; but, on the contrary, an increasing tendency to universal scepticism. The ingenious authors of such treatises find it necessary to raise objections, in order to remove them, and to give a degree of weight and solidity to the arguments of their adversaries, that the weight and solidity of their own victorious arguments may be rendered more conspicuous and more honourable.

The books of the objectors I should never have read, nor should I have known any thing of their objections, had I not been ensnared into an acquaintance with the enemies of truth by the ill-judged conduct of her friends. Heresies and errors long forgotten and exploded were revived by these,

merely to display their ingenuity in refutation. Sometimes, through the weakness of their judgment, they gave advantage to sophistry; and, by throwing with a feeble hand a pointless dart, encouraged a defeated foe to resume new courage.

Even in the most judicious apologies for those doctrines which I thought wanted no apology, though the arguments were conclusive, I did not perceive that my conviction was strengthened; but, on the contrary, that it was in some degree less clear than before I had received argumentative demonstration. My idea of the truth was at first simple, and proportionably evident; but when that idea was connected with a long chain of arguments, my understanding could not so readily comprehend it with all its additional appendages. There is a degree of abstraction in profound writings, which is necessarily attended with a little obscurity. And hence it happens that illustrations, as they are called, of important truths, are sometimes the only circumstances which involve them in darkness.

Whatever complaints have been made against the prevalence of infidelity in this age, and however true that may be of the higher or dissipated orders, it is yet certain, that the christian religion is implicitly received by the greater part of the community. Though their practice, from the infirmity of human nature, is seldom correspondent with their principles, yet they are far from the character of speculative infidels. It is at least highly probable, that all who frequent the established churches are christians. It has therefore been matter of just surprise, that a great number of the most ingenious divines should enter the pulpit, as if they were to convert a congregation of heathens or deists. To prove, by a great variety of laboured arguments, the existence of God, is surely unnecessary before an audience,

whose convention in a church is a proof that they already believe it. It can have little other effect than to lull them asleep, or to suggest scruples instead of removing them. For it is certain, that not half those arguments in support of scepticism have usually fallen within the notice of the common hearer, which are for the most part adduced in the pulpit, in order to be refuted, by a subtile disputant in divinity. A few good treatises might properly enough be written by the truly able, to show the sophistry of a deistical author, and then he and his lucubrations might be suffered to pass on to oblivion; whither they would glide with a rapid course, if they were not impeded by the imprudent interference of those, who, if they are sincere and consistent, must wish to accelerate their extinction.

Neither polemical, controversial, doctrinal, nor systematical divinity, seems well calculated to answer the important ends of true religion. The ends of true religion are all friendly and benign. But peace, benevolence, and purity of heart, are, I believe, not at all promoted in those many volumes of theology, which have owed their origin to controversy, and to logical and metaphysical refinement. They originate in pride, and terminate in acrimony.

One might, indeed, almost venture to pronounce it a judgment on the temerity and the presumption of man, that scarcely any philosopher has distinguished himself by those speculations, which were never designed to fall within the sphere of the human intellect, without starting some notion absurd enough to render his memory ridiculous. Berkley, one of the authors on whom I was so unfortunate as to fall, and whose sense and virtue I venerate, appeared to me an object of ridicule, however ingeniously he had demonstrated to me

the non-existence of matter. I happened to meet with him soon after I had been reading an author who had proved, so far at least as that my poor understanding could not refute him, that the human soul was material, and perished at death. Between them both I found I was, on a sudden, deprived of both my soul and body, without any sensible loss or detriment in either. I was tempted to exclaim, Oh, the foolishness of vain philosophy!

Convinced at last that common sense, or that share and species of understanding, which nature has bestowed on the greater part of men, is, when competently improved, the safest guide to certainty and happiness, I have laid aside proofs, demonstrations, and illustrations of all matters sufficiently proved, demonstrated, and illustrated to the humble mind, by their own internal evidence. And however the learned and the disputatious may amuse themselves in morals and religion with fine-spun subtilties, I shall rest satisfied with the coarser notions of my forefathers, and make the scriptural rule the rule of my thoughts and actions—To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.

No. XLIII. *On the Necessity of Temperance to the Health of the Mind.*

The advantages which arise, from regulating the several appetites, to the health of the body, have been too repeatedly insisted upon to require any

farther animadversion. The present remarks shall be confined to temperance of diet in particular, and to the advantages which accrue from it to the health of the mind.

How far the intellectual faculties are connected with the animal œconomy, is a disquisition which rather belongs to the natural philosopher than to the moralist. The experience of every individual must convince him of their alliance, so far as that the mind and body sympathize in all the modifications of pleasure or of pain.

One would imagine, that the stoical apathy was founded on a notion of the independence of the mind on the body. According to this philosophy, the mind may remain, as it were, an unconcerned spectator, while the body undergoes the most excruciating torments: but the moderns, however disposed to be stoics, cannot help being a little afflicted by a fit of the gout or stone.

If the mind suffers with the body in the violence of pain, and acuteness of disease, it is usually found to recover its wonted strength when the body is restored to health and vigour.

But there is one kind of sympathy, in which the mind continues to suffer even after the body is relieved. When the listless languor, and the nauseous satiety of recent excess is gradually worn off, the mind still continues for a while to feel a burthen, which no efforts can remove; and to be surrounded with a cloud, which time only can dissipate.

Didactic authors, who have undertaken to prescribe rules for the student in his pursuit of knowledge, frequently insist on a regularity and abstinence in the articles of food and wine. It is, indeed, a fruitless labour to aim at increasing the stock of ideas, and improving the powers of pene-

tration, without a strict observance of the laws of Temperance.

It has been remarked, that the founders of colleges, who spared no expense in the embellishment of the buildings, have not been so liberal in providing food for the inhabitants. Perhaps those no less judicious than pious patrons of learning were sensible of the utility of frequent fasting and temperate meals, in promoting literary, as well as moral and religious improvement. Nature's wants they took care to satisfy, and Nature wants but little.

Horace, in a satire in which he professedly enumerates the advantages of Temperance, observes, with a beautiful energy of expression, "that the "body, overcharged with the excess of yesterday, "weighs down the mind together with itself, and "fixes to the earth that particle of the divine "spirit."

That Aurora is a friend to the Muses, is almost proverbial, and, like all those aphorisms which are founded on experience, is a just remark; but, if an adequate cause were to be assigned for this effect, I know not whether it might not justly be attributed as much to fasting, as to the refreshment of sleep. The emptiness of the stomach it is which tends to give to the understanding acuteness, to the imagination vigour, and to the memory retention.

It is well known, that the principal meal of the ancients was the supper; and it has been matter of surprise that they, whose wisdom was so generally conspicuous in the several institutions of common life, should adopt a practice which is now universally esteemed injurious to health. It is however not unreasonable to suppose, that they were unwilling to clog their intellects by satisfying the cravings of hunger in the day-time, the season of business

and deliberation, and chose rather to indulge themselves in the hour of natural festivity, when no care remained, but to retire from the banquet to the pillow.

No. XLIV. *On Conciseness of Style in Writing and Conversation.*

A CELEBRATED French writer, remarkable for CONCISENESS OF STYLE, in a letter to a friend which he had made rather longer than usual, apologizes for its prolixity, by saying, that he had not time to write a shorter.

To say much in few words is certainly a great excellence, and at the same time a great difficulty in composition. The mind naturally dwells on a strong conception, views it on every side, and expresses its variety of lights in as great a variety of words; but the amplification of a sentence, though it may add to its perspicuity, frequently diminishes its force: as the scattered sun beams diffuse only a gentle heat, but are able to burn when collected in the focus.

Brevity of expression is sometimes the mark of conscious dignity and virtue. It was manliness of sentiment, and haughtiness of soul, which gave rise to the laconic style. When the tyrant of Macedon menaced the Lacedemonians, the answer they returned was comprised in these few words: "Dionysius is at Corinth." To understand which, it is necessary to call to mind, that Dionysius, tyrant

of Sicily, had been dethroned by his people, and compelled to earn his bread by setting up a little school at Corinth. Such a document, expressed in so brief a manner, must have struck the mind with more force than the laboured periods of an Isocrates, or the diffusion of a Cicero.

It is well known, that Sallust was an enemy to the great orator of Rome. One would almost imagine, from the difference of their style, that the disagreement extended to matters of taste and literature. Sallust always labours to express his ideas in the fewest words. Cicero delights in amplification. It has been said, however, that a man of true taste would rather have written that beautiful parallel between Cato and Cæsar, than all the Philippies.

Many critics have employed their talents in making comparisons between Demosthenes and Tully. All of them agree in attributing to the former conciseness, and to the latter diffusion: and according to this judgment they have not hesitated to give the preference to the Athenian. The concise vehemence of Demosthenes carried all before it by violence; the prolixity of Cicero gained ground by the soft arts of insinuation. The effect of the former was sudden and irresistible, that of the latter, weak and dilatory.

In the *denouement* of a modern tragedy, we find the heroes and heroines expressing their grief in pompous declamation. But notwithstanding the actor mouths out his plaints in all the grandeur of lengthened periods, and with all the vehemence of studied action, the audience frequently sit unmoved, and are more disposed to smile than to weep. In the Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, Jocasta, when she discovers her own and her husband's situation as deplorable as can well be conceived, immediately

retires from the stage, repeating only these words "—Alas! alas! wretched man that thou art— "this only can I say to thee—henceforth, for "ever silent." Corneille would have put, at least, fifty monotonous lines into her mouth, without half the effect.

Military harangues derive their chief beauty from an expressive brevity. Livy abounds with short speeches, consisting of hardly more than half a dozen words, in which Generals animated their soldiers to rush on to danger and death. But ancient history scarcely affords any instance more striking than that of a French king, who thus addressed his men immediately before an attack—"I "am your General—you are Frenchmen—there are "the enemy."

Conciseness of narration, whether in writing or in speaking, is a mark of truth. To introduce a multitude of proofs and asseverations, is tacitly to confess, that what is said stands in great need of corroboration. One of our English sects, which professes a singular love of truth and plain-dealing, has almost made it a tenet of their religion to use no other words in denying, or asserting, than the single particles of negation and affirmation: and a poet of antiquity remarks, that many promises and professions, instead of strengthening, weaken our belief.

They who have travelled, know that the Frenchman, in the profusion of his politeness, makes many offers which he expects will be refused; and should you really stand in need of his assistance, it is a doubt whether he will give himself much trouble to alleviate your distress, or disentangle your embarrassment: but an Englishman will do you a piece of service secretly, and be distressed with the expressions of your gratitude. The former will overwhelm

you with professions of friendship, without the least real regard; the latter will be surly, and at the same time go all lengths in soothing your sorrows and relieving your wants.

Bluntness is said to be one of the characteristics of the English, and is allowed to be a natural consequence of their sincerity. When it does not degenerate to rusticity, it is not unpleasing.

But the good effects of brevity and conciseness, are not to be found only in writing and conversation. There is something analogous to them in the arts of painting and sculpture. There is a concealment and shading, which sets off more beautifully, and displays more clearly, than an open, an undisguised, a glaring representation. Timanthes took for the subject of a picture, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis. He gave a degree of grief to the spectators, proportionate to the nearness or distance of their relation to the lovely victim. Thus he had exhausted the passion before he came to the father, and, at a loss to express a sufficient anguish, he represented the disconsolate parent concealing his face in the folds of his garments.

Were the causes of the pleasing and powerful effects of conciseness to be investigated, one of them might perhaps be found to be the pleasure which a reader, or spectator, takes in having something left for his own sagacity to discover. The mind greedily snatches at a hint, and delights to enlarge upon it; but frigid is the employment of attending to those productions, the authors of which have laboured every thing into such perspicuity, that the observer has nothing to do but barely to look on. Things may be too obvious to excite attention. The sun, the moon, and the stars, roll over our heads every day without attracting our notice; but we survey with eager curiosity, a comet, an

eclipse, or any other extraordinary phænomenon in nature.

No. XLV. *On the Character and Style of Pliny the Younger.*

The character of Pliny the younger, in whatever light it is viewed, is pleasing. The elegance of his writings resulted from the habitual elegance of his mind. Considered as a man of letters, and a man of the world, he may be said, more than any of the ancients, to deserve the epithet of *All-accomplished.*

It has indeed been objected, that his letters are too elaborate. Ease, the characteristic of the epistolary style, is said to be sacrificed to studied ornament: but it should be remembered by the censurers of Pliny, that there are beauties of art, as well as of nature: and that art, even when misplaced, may produce an agreeable work, as nature may bring forth something anomalous, which, though termed a monster by the naturalists, may yet be beautiful. The perusal of Pliny's letters excites a pleasure more similar to that which arises from a view of an elegant parterre, than to that which is derived from contemplating the ruder beauties of uncultivated nature.

Pliny is among those few ancient authors, who have been translated into English without losing much of their original grace. Lord Orrery and Mr. Melmoth seem to have resembled him in their manners, as well as in their style. The task was

natural to them, for while they expressed their author's idea, they appear to have expressed their own. Both the translations have uncommon merit; and, if a preference be given to Melmoth's, it must at the same time be acknowledged, that a very great share of praise is due to that of Lord Orrery.

The panegyric of Trajan has, like the epistles, been censured as stiff, laboured, and affected; but if the beauties of the composition can excuse the appearance of labour in the epistles, with much greater reason ought they to justify it in a formal oration. At an advanced period of literature, when taste becomes too capricious and depraved to endure the graces of nature and simplicity, there is no resource left for an author who would acquire popularity, but to labour in the invention of ingenious thoughts, and in bestowing on his productions the nicest polish of art. Panegyrical pieces of eloquence are commonly of all others the most difficult, because their subjects are commonly of all others the most barren. What may be said in praise of any man, may usually be comprehended in few words, if naked truth and unembellished facts are represented. Whenever, therefore, it is required, by the ceremonies of a public solemnity, to expatiate on the virtues of particular persons, the orator soon finds himself under a necessity of supplying the deficiency of matter, by ingenious turns and laboured ornaments.

The compositions of Pliny are not likely to please the common or superficial reader. Sounding periods, and animated expressions, are required by the vulgar, rather than the less obvious beauties of correctness and refinement. The passions and the imagination of those, whose intellects and judgment are weak, are often strong and lively. Their

mental appetite, like their corporeal, unaccustomed to delicacy, learns to prefer coarse viands to the dainties of luxury. An uncultivated mind perhaps feels, at least, an equal pleasure from the rude ballad of an itinerant singer, with that which arises to an improved taste from the polished pieces of a Horace, or an Anacreon. It is, therefore, no derogation from the merits of Pliny, that he is not universally admired. His elegance is too subtle and refined for the vulgar eye.

Though great genius may be displayed in hewing even a rough statue, or in sketching an imperfect picture; yet the judicious connoisseur will always feel a pleasure in examining those works of sculpture or painting, which have received the highest polish, and have been finished with the nicest traits of the pencil. Such writers as Homer and Shakspeare I must admire with all their imperfections on their heads; but yet, as imperfections are not of themselves laudable, it is surely consistent with reason to admire those also, who, like Pliny, are even painfully solicitous to avoid them. Longinus, with all the ardour of genius, prefers faulty eminence to faultless mediocrity; but yet neither he, nor any other sensible critic, has pronounced correctness a fault.

It is possible that the judgment may approve, while the heart and imagination remain unaffected. But we read to be moved, to be entertained, to be delighted. Mere approbation is a frigid sentiment. An animated work, therefore, which excites warm emotions, attended with occasional disgust, is read in preference to another, which is insipid, though correct, and dull, though judicious. But where genius is united with correct taste, the judgment, the heart, and the imagination are at once fully satisfied. Such a combination existed in the minds

of Pliny and Addison. It must indeed be remarked, to the honour of Addison, that he is far more natural than Pliny. He has all the elegance of the polite Roman, without the affectation.

"The elegance of Pliny's manners," says Melmoth, "adds force to the most interesting, at the "same time that it enlivens the most common subjects. But the polite and spirited turn of his "Epistles is by no means their principal recommendation: they receive a much higher value, as "they exhibit one of the most amiable and animating characters in all antiquity. Pliny's whole "life seems to have been employed in the exercise "of every generous and social affection." Who then, I ask, will not forgive the blemishes of his writings, especially as they are surrounded with so much beauty?

No. XLVI. *On the Expediency of embellishing Composition with Harmonious Periods, and with other Judicious Ornaments.*

The laborious antiquary, and the dull compiler, are commonly contented with a book, however unadorned and uninteresting, if it affords information. The flowers of rhetoric they despise as meretricious artifices; and the graces of style they neglect as contributing more to embellishment than to solidity.

But the majority of readers are neither able nor desirous to overcome that propensity to be pleased,

which they derive from nature. Besides an understanding to conceive, an imagination to invent, and a memory to retain, they have an ear finely susceptible of all the music of modulated periods. Compositions not addressed to the latter as well as to the former of these faculties, they may reject as defective. The finest reasoning, and the most animated oratory, are attended to with disgust, when accompanied with discord. Intrinsic merit may excite approbation, but external ornament is necessary to give pleasure. An accurate system, or a well-authenticated history, however rugged the style, is valuable as a collection of materials; but cannot claim the title of a perfect composition, till it is polished to such a degree of smoothness or brilliancy as the species of writing seems to require.

In the rude ages of literature, the mind acquiesces in solid sense expressed in unharmonious diction. An Ennius among the Romans, and a Shakspeare among the moderns, is admired for justness and sublimity of conception, though the style be rugged and discordant. The novelty of the first literary productions causes so strong a pleasure in the reader's mind, that he can perceive nothing wanting to complete his satisfaction. His ear is unaccustomed to tuneful measures, and, for want of better examples, feels a pleasure arising from the harshest numbers. Thus the vulgar listen with delight to the rude notes of a ballad-singer; while the refined ear of a connoisseur in music cannot be soothed but with the soft warbling of an Italian.

But succeeding writers find it necessary, if they hope for readers, to adopt graces unknown to their predecessors. They find it difficult to add novelty to the matter; because, in the course of a few ages, every subject is frequently treated, and consequently soon exhausted. Systematical writings must often,

from their very nature, contain nearly the same thoughts, connected in a similar manner. In all kinds of composition, which, either from their particular nature, or from their having been before discussed, admit of no additional invention, if novelty is necessary, it must be in the style, and not in the matter. An author, who cannot add any thing new to the philosophy of a Bacon or a Newton, may yet deliver their thoughts in such a manner, and refine their beauties with such ornaments of diction, that his works may be more read than those of the inventors, from whom it was derived. Fontenelle and Le Pluche have been universally studied, while the sources from which they drew, the works of Bacon and Boyle, are often left a prey to moths and worms in some deserted library.

The books which have united delight with instruction, have always survived those which had no other aim than real utility. Dulness only can pore over the uninteresting page where nothing is offered to sooth the ear, and flatter the imagination. Such study resembles a journey over gloomy deserts, where no sunbeam cheers the way, no hospitable door invites, no enchanting prospect alleviates the pain of fatigue. Necessity alone can urge the traveller over barren tracks and snowtopt mountains; but he treads with rapture along the fertile vales of those happier climes, where every breeze is perfume, and every scene a picture. Hence in the repositories of literature, we observe, that bulky tomes, replete with the profundest erudition, are left untouched on dusty shelves; while the more superficial, yet more pleasing, productions are perused with delight, and committed to memory by repetition. It is indeed a melancholy reflection, that those immense works of learning, which cost the labour of a life, which were produced by many an

aching head and palpitating heart, and by which their authors hoped to acquire immortality, are at last consigned to oblivion, because external beauty is not united with intrinsic value.

Every species of composition has some end in view, which if it does not accomplish, it falls short of due perfection. The end of all historical, rhetorical, and poetical works, is to please as well as to instruct. If either of these does not comprehend every mode of pleasing which is consistent with its kind, it is faulty. Upon this plea, the advocates for rhyme, in English verse, rest their argument. Rhyme, say they, judiciously conducted, gives an additional power of pleasing to the natural inherent charms of poetry. It is not to be rejected as a gothic ornament, invented by monkish barbarism, and continued by a bigotted adherence to custom; but is to be adopted and admired as an improvement even on classic versification. In the hands of a Dryden, or a Pope, it sooths the ear with a melody hardly excelled by a Virgil; and though no judicious critic can join Voltaire in censuring Shakspeare for not adopting rhyme (because rhyme is absurd in conversation, whether dramatic or convivial), yet every one must allow, that the poems of Pope would lose much of their beauty should they be deprived of rhyme, even though the subject matter were not to undergo the least variation. We should indeed find, as Horace says on another occasion, the scattered limbs of a dismembered poet, but we should infallibly lose all those graces which result from melody. The bare matter, however just the thoughts and forcible the reasoning, would not give the author the reputation of a great poet. The same remarks may be transferred to prosaic composition. We shall seldom listen, unless the ear is charmed while the mind is convinced.

One may compare writing to building. It is not enough to bring the stone from the quarry, and form it into a regular pile, in the rude state in which it was produced by nature. It may, indeed, however rough and unshaken, afford a shelter in necessity, and serve all the purposes of common use; but will not strike the eye of a passenger with wonder, till the chisel in the master's hand shall have called forth each latent beauty, added the festoon and the Corinthian foliage, and united grace with strength.

To prove how naturally we are attached to modulated composition, we may remark, that the first works of the most celebrated writers were poetical. The faculty of imagination is the earliest that displays itself in the human mind. The ardour of youth, too wild to be restrained by frigid rules, loves to indulge in all the licence of poetry; but as the reasoning powers ripen, they are enabled to control the sallies of fancy, which, perhaps, of itself gradually grows chaster and more correct. At this advanced period, the mind descends from the heights of poetry to prose. But it insensibly and unavoidably communicates some of the graces of the art which it has relinquished, to that which it assumes. A vein of poetical ore will be discerned not only in the thought, but in the style; which, though it will not fall into the fault of real metre, will necessarily flow in such cadence as a poetical ear shall dictate and improve.

Unlearned readers seldom attend to the beauties of harmonious composition. If they are pleased with it, they know not whence their pleasure arises. Attentive to the matter rather than the manner, they would, perhaps, think an author but ill employed, who should write a long treatise on the art of turning a period. They would be surprised to be informed, that one of the ancient critics has ac-

quired a great reputation by writing on an art which is conversant in sound, rather than in sense, and which is therefore, in their opinion, unimportant. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, however, owes more of his reputation to his Treatise on the Structure of Words, than to any other of his works.

Nor has the art been confined to speculative critics; for Cicero, a practical rhetorician, has attributed an efficacy to the harmony of periods, which experience only can prove to be real. A sentence of no more than five words, he informs us, was received with universal plaudits, though, as the author of it confessed, their whole merit consisted in the skilful collocation. Transpose but a single word, and the effect will be entirely lost. In his elegant Dialogues on the Character of an Orator, he has entered into a curious disquisition on the subject of prosaic numbers, and seems to require in an oration, an exactness of metre almost equal to that of verse. The subject is certainly curious, and this great rhetorician, as well as orator, has treated it with precision: but as the quantity of Latin words is ascertained by rules very different from the analogy of modern languages, the strictures of Cicero have no otherwise contributed to harmonize the periods of our writers, than by suggesting the beauty and expediency of prosaic modulation.

But if his precepts have not much influence in giving this finishing grace to compositions in our own language, his example may communicate to them the most captivating melody. His cadences are almost as pleasing to a susceptible ear, as a regular piece of music. So necessary did he deem it to satisfy the sense of hearing, that he often adds a synonymous and unnecessary word to complete the roundness of his period. To accuse an author, of Cicero's fame, of using words merely for the sound,

may, perhaps, surprise him who is not conversant in his writings; but the recollection of a few passages will immediately induce those, who are well acquainted with his works, to acknowledge the justness of this observation.

But whoever would trace this harmony to its origin, must be referred to the Greek writers. Their numerous expletives which occur in every page, are used almost solely to fill up chasms in the cadence, and to render the harmony full and perfect. Some critics have, indeed, attempted to point out the signification of every particle in every passage; but their ill success, after all their diligence, tends to confirm the preceding position.

The periods of Plato are the models of Cicero. A good ear, on a cursory comparison of a few sentences, cannot but observe how well the Roman orator has imitated the Greek philosopher.

It may be reasonably conjectured, that one cause why those ancient writers, who have come down to us entire, survived their contemporaries, may be, that they extended their attention beyond copiousness and solidity to pleasing sound and modulated cadence.

Among all our late writers, none appear to me so capable of pleasing an *attic ear* as the late Mr. Harris, of Salisbury. In his Philological Inquiries he has treated the subject on which I now speak, with peculiar accuracy and elegance.

No. XLVII. *On the Prevailing Taste for the Old English Poets.*

THE antiquarian spirit, which was once confined to inquiries concerning the manners, the buildings, the records, and the coins of the ages that preceded us, has now extended itself to those poetical compositions which were popular among our forefathers, but which have gradually sunk into oblivion through the decay of language, and the prevalence of a correct and polished taste. Books printed in the black letter are sought for with the same avidity with which the English antiquary peruses a monumental inscription, or treasures up a Saxon piece of money. The popular ballad composed by some illiterate minstrel, and which has been handed down by tradition for several centuries, is rescued from the hands of the vulgar, to obtain a place in the collection of the man of taste. Verses, which a few years past, were thought worthy the attention of children only, or of the lowest and rudest orders, are now admired for that artless simplicity, which once obtained the name of coarseness and vulgarity.

It must be confessed, that the species of antiquarianism is better calculated for the public in general than any other. An old rusty coin or shield would excite rapture in a Swinton or Rawlinson, but would be beheld with perfect indifference by the greater part of the literati, and by all the unlearned. But the genuine beauties of poetry are capable of being relished by those who are perfectly regardless whether or not it was printed in the black letter, and written by Rowley or by Chatterton. Every lover of poetry is pleased with the judicious selec-

tion of Percy, though he gives himself little concern about dates. The antiquary may perhaps admire the oldest and the worst piece in the collection, only because it is old. The common reader, however, does often partake with the antiquarian in the pleasure resulting from labour bestowed in researches after poetry, though he has no adequate idea of the supreme felicity of finding an Otho.

The mere antiquarian taste in poetry, or the admiration of *bad* poetry merely because it is ancient, is certainly absurd. It is more difficult to discover the meaning of many of our old poets, disguised as it is in an obsolete and uncouth phraseology, than to read an elegant Greek or Latin author. Such study is, indeed, not unfrequently, like raking in a dunghill for pearls, and gaining the labour only for one's pains.

Our earlier poets, many of whose names and works are deservedly forgotten, seem to have thought that rhyme was poetry. And even this constituent requisite they applied with extreme negligence. It was, however, good enough for its readers; most of whom considered the mere ability of reading as a very high attainment. It has had its day, and the antiquary must not despise us, if we cannot peruse it with patience. He who delights in all such reading as is never read, may derive some pleasure from the singularity of his taste; but he ought still to respect the judgment of mankind, which has consigned to oblivion the works which he admires. While he pores unmolested on Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve, let him not censure our obstinacy in adhering to Homer, Virgil, Milton, and Pope.

In perusing the antiquated pages of our English bards, we sometimes find a passage which has comparative merit, and which shines with the greater

lustre, because it is surrounded with deformity. While we consider the rude taste of literature, the want of models, the depraved state of readers, we are struck with the least appearance of beauty. We are flattered with an idea of our own penetration, in discovering excellencies which have escaped the notice of the world. We take up the volume with a previous determination, to prove that it contains valuable matter. We are unwilling that our pains should be unrewarded. We select a few lines from a long work, and by a little critical refinement, prove that they are wonderfully excellent. But the candid are ready to confess, that they have not often discovered in this department a sufficient degree or quantity of absolute merit to repay the labour of a profound research.

Rowe has said, that the old English bards and minstrels soared many a height above their followers; and it is true, that those old ballads, which are in the mouths of peasants on both sides the Tweed, have something in them irresistibly captivating. Vulgar, coarse, inelegant, they yet touch the heart. Many of them, when read, as the writers intended, are musical. They have pleased the ear and the mind of a whole people, and therefore, in spite of the cold feelings of the critic, must be pronounced beautiful. Addison first gained them the notice of scholars, by his praises of Chevy-Chase. He illustrated their beauties, by comparing them with the Classics. This indeed drew the attention of the classical reader; but it may be questioned, whether it would not be a better method to view them as originals; and in order to procure them a general reception, appeal to the genuine feelings of nature. For, in truth, when compared as compositions, with the correct works of Virgil or Horace, the barbarous language in which they are written

makes them appear to disadvantage. At the same time it must be confessed, that it affords a very pleasing employment to the polite scholar, to remark the coincidencies of thought, which are usually found in works of genius, written at different periods by those who could not possibly imitate each other. The philosopher gladly seizes the phenomenon, as it tends to elucidate a curious truth respecting the human mind, that all men of nearly equal faculties, fall into nearly the same train of thought when placed in similar circumstances.

Notwithstanding the incontrovertible merit of many of our ancient relics of poetry, I believe it may be doubted, whether any one of them would be tolerated as the production of a modern poet. As a good imitation of the ancient manner it would find its admirers; but, considered independently as an original, it would be thought a careless, vulgar, inartificial composition. There are few who do not read Dr. Percy's own piece, and those of other late writers, with more pleasure, than the oldest ballad in the collection of that ingenious writer.

Poetical genius appeared with great lustre among the Scots, at a time when it was obscured in England. At one of the barrenest periods of English literature, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lyndsay, wrote with great elegance, as far as the language would admit, in the true spirit of original poetry. They wanted only a better language, and a more durable dialect, to have become national classics. With all their beauties, it is difficult to read them with patience; for the necessity of continually recurring to a glossary, cools the ardour which the perusal of a beautiful passage may have excited, and induces the tired reader to fly to more modern books, whose gold, equally pure, may be extracted without the trouble of an analytical process.

The present age, it must be owned with regret, is an age of literary deception. It is indeed characteristical of an advanced period of letters and refinement, when the various modes of writing have, in every department, been anticipated, to have recourse to forgery in order to gain attention. Of this every one acquainted with the present state of literature in England is sensible. Chatterton, though the best, is not the only imitator and pretended restorer of our ancient poets.

It will be allowed by all, that a composition ought to be estimated by its absolute, not its relative merit. And yet a poem, which, while it is supposed to have been written three or four centuries ago, is generally read and admired, is neglected as soon as it is discovered to be a modern production. This seems to have been the case with the reputed poems of Rowley. That a work should lose its value in the eyes of the antiquary, when it is found to wear only a counterfeited rust, is not wonderful; but it might reasonably be supposed, that a man of taste would continue to admire it even after the detection. Though at the same time it is true, that most men have so much of the antiquarian spirit as to feel an additional pleasure when excellence is united with antiquity. By an effort of imagination, we place ourselves in the age of the author, and call up a thousand collateral ideas, which give beauties to his work not naturally inherent.

Whether the antiquarian taste in poetry is reasonable or unreasonable, it affords an elegant and a pleasing amusement to those who possess it. Mistakes in matters of mere taste and literature are harmless in their consequences to society. They have no direct tendency to hurt any interest, or corrupt any morals. While therefore they are not likely to become general, they must not be attacked

with virulence. Disputes in the republic of letters; a republic, unlike the political commonwealth, should be conducted with gentleness. That humanity of temper, which a successful pursuit of learning inspires, would, of itself, it might be supposed, secure a mild and generous behaviour in literary controversy. But the reverse has usually been the case. Bentley, Middleton, Warburton, have sometimes indulged an irritable temper beyond those limits, which, as christians and scholars, they must have seen and approved. They who have observed the rancour mutually displayed in the disagreements of the learned, must have concluded, if they knew not the state of the question, that something of the utmost consequence to life, fame, or fortune, was at stake. Contempt or indignation must have taken place, when they found that nothing more was agitated, than the propriety or impropriety of Greek accents, the genuineness of some foolish book, the justness of a conjectural emendation, and other subjects, which had not the least tendency to promote or injure either science or society.

No. XLVIII. *On the Moral Effects of Painting and Prints.*

EVERY thing which is capable of affecting the mind in a forcible manner may be rendered subservient to the purposes of morality. Music, and indeed all the sister arts, are known to possess a power of exciting sentiments of various kinds; of rousing the

mind to manly virtue, or relaxing it to vice and effeminacy. But perhaps none are more instantaneous or subtle in their operation than the productions of the art of painting. Every one who can see, is able to collect the meaning of an obvious picture, and the transition from the eyes to the heart is short and rapid. To receive an impression from a book, it is necessary to read and to reflect, but the idea suggested by a painting is caught at a glance.

A liberal and philosophical statesman, whose comprehensive mind attends to the morals no less than the finances of a nation, will consider the public exhibition of pictures as a matter of national concern. He will use his influence to cause such figures to be represented to the public, as have a natural tendency to call forth manly sentiments, to diffuse a love of decency and order, a spirit of benevolence, honour, honesty, and patriotic virtue. Divines and philosophers, warriors and statesmen, useful writers, and good men of all denominations, represented with all the charms of the pencil, and with all the natural expression of their countenances, cannot fail to animate the bosom with a love of excellence. And it is one peculiar advantage, that this effect may be produced on the rude and the vulgar, on those who have never been improved by education, and who are neither able nor inclined to improve themselves by reading and reflection. The encouragement of the arts is indeed attended with a considerable expense; but while they are made by due direction to improve the minds of the people, they amply repay it. When they are so perverted as to produce unmanly sentiments, or vicious and idle habits, they are, at once, the bane of private life and of a free constitution.

The world never yet saw the equal of our coun-

tryman Hogarth, in the art of moral painting. The scenes, indeed, which he has exhibited, are taken, for the most part, though not always, from low life; but in this respect the painter showed his judgment; not only because low life affords a greater abundance and variety of humour, but because low life stands most in need of instruction, and can receive it more easily from a picture than from oral or written documents. I very much doubt, whether the sermons of a Tillotson ever dissuaded so efficaciously from lust, cruelty, and intemperance, as the prints of a Hogarth.

The painters of the Dutch or Flemish school do indeed represent low life; but the representations are rather amusing than instructive. Indeed, I am not sure that they are not injurious to mankind; for while they exhibit men in some of the lowest and most humiliating forms, they tend to increase his real degradation. It is much to be lamented, that the great skill which they evidently display in the art of painting, was not employed in subjects more susceptible of elevation.

Humorous pictures or prints are, however, too entertaining to be rejected, while they are restrained within the limits of decency and good-nature. The taste for them is, in this age and country, very prevalent; but I am sorry to say, that the limits which we have just mentioned are too little observed. Among the various methods invented for the gratification of private and party malice, few have been more successful than the carricatura. There is no personage however exalted, nor character however respectable, which may not be lowered in the estimation of the vulgar, by a ludicrous picture exhibited to public view. Some action, passion, feature, attitude, or dress, may be applied to the most deserving man, and may render him an

object of ridicule. A most unjust perversion of a noble art; but which, it is to be feared, will continue while the public is led by its taste for detraction to reward the artist by the purchase of his works, however defamatory.

Humorous prints have been of late very successfully used to ridicule some of those extravagancies of dress and manners, which arise from effeminacy of manners, and tend to increase it. The figures represented have raised a very natural and innocent laugh, and the satire, though well pointed and directed, has not usually been personal. Nothing can be more laudable, than to exert this very efficacious art in rendering folly, vanity, and vice, objects of derision.

But it must be confessed, that it is much oftener employed in corrupting the heart and imagination by indecent figures. And here I cannot help making a complaint against the police of the metropolis, which allows some of the shops in the most crowded streets to exhibit, in their windows, such prints as cannot fail to enflame the passions of inexperienced youth. Why slumbers the magistrate, or to what purpose are the laws and wise regulations of a civilized state, if we cannot permit our children to walk through the public streets of the capital without danger of corrupting their morals, merely by their looking into a window, which is so furnished as to attract the attention of the most innocent and unsuspicious? A great and successive crowd is usually assembled before the print-shops, which, while it annoys the honest passenger who is hastening to transact important business, is perpetually drinking in a poisonous draught, of which who can tell how malignant and diffusive may be the consequences? Indeed, the print-shops, which display to thousands

in the course of every day the most inflammatory prints, may justly be stigmatised as the guides to the brothel. In ancient times, and in heathen cities, we read of the utmost precautions taken to preserve the modesty of young men; and ought not the rulers of the greatest city in the Christian world to blush while they connive at a practice, which tends, perhaps more than any thing else, to debauch the minds of apprentices, clerks, and indeed of all the rising generation? It is certainly a nuisance, and may legally be removed. The interest of some unconscientious individual might perhaps be injured by lessening the sale of his corrupting representations; but what is the interest of an individual, when put in competition with the morals of the multitude? If the print-shops in a great city were to exhibit only virtuous prints, they might be highly serviceable to the cause of morality.

The serious part of mankind have complained, that some of the catchpenny periodical publications have of late been embellished, as it is called, with such prints as tend immediately to corrupt private life, and most essentially to injure society. Neither have they appeared clandestinely, but have boldly solicited notice by a description of their contents in the public advertisements. The serious part of mankind have, I say, complained, and have asked each other, whether the official guardians of religion and decency have been so immersed in politics, or so engaged in pursuit of preferment, as not to have noticed publications which they ought, if they possessed sufficient influence, to have suppressed? They who have sons and daughters cannot but apprehend danger, when the most licentious pictures are daily obtruded on the public eye; and they cannot help thinking, at the same time, that the pre-

servation of the children of the commonwealth deserves at least as much attention from the legislature, as the preservation of hares and puppies.

The art of painting is one of those innocent and delightful means of pleasure, which Providence has kindly afforded to brighten the prospects of human life. Under due reflections, and with proper direction, it may be rendered something more than an elegant mode of pleasing the eye and the imagination; it may become a very powerful auxiliary of virtue.

It is but just to add, that soon after this paper was printed, but before it was published, the magistrates of London issued orders for the prosecution of such printsellers as should exhibit licentious prints in their windows.

No. XLIX. *On the Impropriety of publicly adopting a New Translation of the Bible.*

The translators of our Bible, it is allowed, had great merit; but, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, it is not surprising that the translation is not exempt from the characteristic of all human undertakings. Critics, assisted by the labours of the translators, have prosecuted their inquiries into the Hebrew text, and have detected errors in it which they are willing to magnify into importance. Manuscripts having been collated, and the Hebrew text at last ascertained, as far as human ingenuity can ascertain it, there seems, at the com-

pletion of the labour, to be a wish among the critics for a new translation.

For my own part, if I may venture to give an opinion contrary to that of the profound collators of Hebrew manuscripts, I cannot help thinking a new translation of the Bible an attempt extremely dangerous, and quite unnecessary. Instead of serving the cause of religion, which is the ostensible motive for the wish, I am convinced that nothing would more immediately tend to shake the basis of the establishment.

Time gives a venerable air to all things, to men, to trees, to buildings, and to books. Sacred things acquire peculiar sanctity by long duration. A new church, with all the embellishments of Grecian architecture, is far less venerable than the Gothic tower overgrown with moss. The present translation of the Bible derives an advantage from its antiquity greatly superior to any which could arise from the correction of its inaccuracies. Imagine a Roman senator or warrior, dressed out like a powdered beau of modern times. Much more care is bestowed on him in his present dress. He is nicely and accurately arrayed in every part. But what is the result? He is now pretty, and before he was majestic. Just so, were the Bible corrected and modernized, it would probably become more showy, and perhaps quite exact: but it would lose that air of sanctity, which enables it to make an impression which no accuracy could produce.

We have received the Bible in the very words in which it now stands from our fathers; we have learned many passages of it by heart in our infancy; we find it quoted in sermons from the earliest to the latest times; so that its phrase is become familiar to our ear, and we cease to be startled at apparent difficulties. Let all this be called prejudice; but it

is a prejudice which universally prevails in the middle and lower ranks; and we should hardly recognize the Bible, were it to be read in our churches in any other words than those which our fathers heard before us.

It is true, indeed, that some very devout and well-meaning people carry the prejudice too far, when they profess to believe that our translation was written with the finger of the Almighty, and that to alter a tittle of it is to be guilty of blasphemy. But still, as the faith of such persons is strong, and their intentions pious, it would be imprudent to shock their minds by an innovation, which they could not help considering as an insult on heaven. If the lessons in the church were to be read in different words from those which they have heard from their infancy, their faith might be more endangered than by all the arguments of the deists. And such persons, though the sarcastic may stigmatize them as weak brethren, are too valuable members, especially in this age, to be wantonly cut off from the body of the church.

But forbearing to urge the air of veneration acquired by time, or the attachments formed by prejudice to the Bible, I cannot help thinking, that the present translation ought to be retained in our churches for its intrinsic beauty and excellence. We have had one specimen of a new translation of the Bible by a very learned and ingenious bishop. It is exact and curious; but I will venture to say it approaches not to the majesty, sublimity, and fire of the old translation. A reader, after going through it, will not upon the whole, receive so deep and lasting an impression from it, as from the old one, with all its imperfections. And it is from the general effect of a work that its excellence must be estimated.

The poetical passages of scripture are peculiarly pleasing in the present translation. The language, though it is simple and natural, is rich and expressive. Solomon's Song, difficult as it is to be interpreted, may be read with delight, even if we attend to little else but the brilliancy of the diction; and it is a circumstance which increases its grace, that it appears to be quite unstudied. The Psalms, as well as the whole Bible, are literally translated, and yet that translation abounds with passages exquisitely beautiful and irresistibly transporting. Even where the sense is not very clear, nor the connexion of ideas obvious at first sight, the mind is soothed, and the ear ravished, with the powerful yet unaffected charms of the style. It is not indeed necessary to enlarge on the excellences of the translation in general; for its beauties are such as are to be recognized by feeling more than by description, and it must be owned, that they have been powerfully felt by the majority of the nation ever since the first edition. In many a cottage and farm-house, where the Bible and Prayer-Book constitute the library, the sweet songs of Judah, and the entertaining histories of Joseph and his brethren, Saul and Jonathan, constitute a never-failing source of heart-felt pleasure.

It is false refinement, vain philosophy, and an immoderate love of dissipation, which causes so little attention to be paid to this venerable book in the busy and gay world. If we do not disclaim all belief in its contents, it is surely a great omission in many gentlemen and ladies who wish to be completely accomplished, or think themselves so already, to be utterly unacquainted with the sacred volume. It is our duty to inspect it, and it is graciously so ordered, that our duty in this instance may be a pleasure; for the Bible is truly pleasing,

considered only as a collection of very ancient and curious history and poetry.

With respect to the impropriety of appointing a new translation to be read in churches, what I have advanced on the subject is only matter of opinion, and may perhaps be found in the event erroneous. I shall, however, very confidently say, that innovations of this kind are of the highest importance, and may probably be attended with the most violent concussions. They ought therefore to be attempted only when there is an absolute necessity for them, and after the maturest deliberation.

No. L. *On the Multiplication of Books.*

No amusements are more easily attainable, and attended with more solid satisfaction and fewer inconveniencies, than the literary. In these late ages, there is scarcely a subject, which can reasonably excite human curiosity, on which satisfactory information may not be acquired by the perusal of books, which, from their multitude, are obvious to all who are disposed to give them their attention. Poetry, history, eloquence, and philosophy in all its ramifications, are constantly at hand, and ready to gratify the mental appetite with every elegant variety of intellectual sustenance. The imagination can at all times call up, by the medium of books, the most vivid representations of every object, which the physical and moral world have been known to produce. Exempt from the inconveniences of foreign travel, from the dangers of a military life,

from the narrow escapes of the voyager, and from the tumult of political engagements, the student can enjoy, in the comfortable retreat of his library, all that has employed the active faculties of man in every department of life.

As a source of a very lively, as well as a pure pleasure, reading is become the constant amusement of that considerable part of the community, whom the circumstances of profession, sex, or inclination, have confined to a sedentary life. The age is said to be dissipated, and the most superficial observation will justify the complaint. Yet it must, on the other hand, be acknowledged, that it is most extensively enlightened. Books, that possess originality and real merit, are still encouraged. Circulating libraries, furnished with valuable as well as trifling works, and societies established for the purchase of new publications, abound throughout the kingdom. The stream of national knowledge is certainly diffuse; nor is there sufficient reason to assert, what some have maintained, that it is become shallow by diffusion. If the productions of those who have gone before are richer and more solid, it reflects not disgrace on their followers, whose discoveries are anticipated by the first investigators. He who first opens the mine, will return laden with treasure at an easy rate. He who succeeds may, with more sagacity and labour, acquire less; nor should it detract from his praise, that he brings forth little where little remained.

In this advanced stage of literature, much of the student's life is necessarily employed in retracing the progress of those who have preceded him. He heaps up knowledge, and has often little time, even if he has inclination and ability, to communicate it in a correct and graceful manner. There is little doubt, but that many of the literati, who have never

written, are at least equal in the extent of their knowledge to the writers whom they study and admire. They have never written, perhaps, from indolence, and perhaps from a want of a power to utter, with agreeable facility, what they apprehend with clearness. These must be supplied with a constant succession of books; and it is found by experience, that few books please more cordially, or at least excite attention more forcibly, than those of contemporary authors. It appears then, that for the sake of the learned as well as the common reader, the multiplication of books, though it has sometimes been lamented, ought, upon the whole, to be encouraged. No one is compelled to read what he does not approve. A sumptuous entertainment is prepared, nor should the guest find fault with the number or variety of the dishes. They are all laid before him with design to give him pleasure, and it is easy to select that which is capable of affording it, and to refuse all that is insipid or disgustful.

Modern authors are naturally disposed to justify to themselves and others the addition which they make to the number of books. They are unwilling to suppose, that every subject is anticipated; that all the avenues to fame are closed; that the knowledge acquired by study, and adorned by the expression of genius, is incapable of obtaining its proper reward, the praise of every ingenuous and congenial mind. Literary productions continue, therefore, to multiply, and every writer finds some plausible apology for presenting to the public an additional volume.

No. LI. *Letters the Source of solid Consolation.*

THE sacred writers, the heathen philosophers, all who have either thought or written with solidity, have agreed that man is born to trouble, and that few and evil are his days. The moral poet Euripides has said, that to be a Man is a sufficient plea for being miserable; and who indeed has not felt this truth?

Yet it is at the same time true, that the kind hand of Providence has scattered flowers as well as thorns in the road of life; and the great skill required, is to select those that are perennial, those that do not bud, blow, and wither in a day, from those that shine with transient lustre, or conceal poisonous qualities under a vivid foliage.

Among the many arguments for a classical and comprehensive education, there are few which ought to have a greater weight, than that it enables those who enjoy the benefit of it, to derive the purest, the sweetest, the most elegant, and the least injurious pleasures from themselves and from reflection. The man of taste and learning creates, as it were, a little world of his own, in which he exercises his faculties; and he feels his most exalted satisfactions arising from things, the existence of which is scarcely known to the vulgar mind.

The parent in the middle ranks of life, who is able to place his son above dependence, contributes more to his real happiness, when he gives him a taste for the classics, and for studies which will exalt his nature, than when by making him a trader without a gentleman's education, he affords him an opportunity of hereafter shining in the mean magni-

ficence of wealth, unaccompanied with elegance and liberality. To possess thousands with the narrow spirit of a mere stock-jobber, can add but little real happiness. But to possess a just taste for a Virgil, and for the other fine writers whom the world has long admired; to be capable of feeling their beauties, with only the common comforts and conveniences of life, will confer an elegance and dignity of mind; and will cause a finer pleasure than was ever known to a Crassus or a Clive.

Where, indeed, shall we find objects capable of attaching the mind in every stage of life, in every condition, in every time, in every place, but in the walks of literature? These studies, says Cicero, in a passage which can never be too often repeated, afford nourishment to our youth, delight our old age, adorn prosperity, supply a refuge in adversity, are a constant source of pleasure at home, are no impediment while abroad, attend us in the night-season, and accompany us in our travels and retirements. The great statesman spoke the dictates of his own experience. To his hours of dejection and privacy, we owe many of his finest philosophical treatises, in the composition of which he a while forgot his own and his country's calamity.

Deep sorrow is known to seek solitude for indulgence. Company may dissipate the lighter cares, but it appears like mockery to real woe. Add to this, that to mix with company while under the influence of grief, unless it is the company of familiar friends, is a violation of the rules of propriety, since it tends to throw a damp on that cheerfulness, to promote which is one of the ends of society. But solitude invites to reading; and amid the great variety of books, some one may always be found in unison with our own temper In the retirements of

our library, no insolent intruder can upbraid us for disinclination or incapacity to taste convivial enjoyment. There we may find balsam for every wound of the mind, and a lenient medicine for every disease.

When the prospects which present themselves in the common road of life are dark and dreary, the man of taste can step aside into the elysium of poesy, and tread the flowery paths, and view the gilded scenes which fancy raises with the magic of enchantment. The ingenious biographer of the poet Gray has informed us, that the most approved productions of his friend were brought forth soon after the death of one whom the poet loved. Sorrow led him to seek for solace of the muse. That the muse smiled on her votary, every reader of taste has already acknowledged. Sacred history has acquainted us with the power of music over the passions, and there is little doubt but the verse as well as the lyre of David, can soothe the troubled spirits to repose.

It is difficult to be attached to the common objects of human pursuit, without feeling the sordid or the troublesome passions. But in the pursuits of learning, all is liberal, noble, generous. They require and promote that comprehensive mode of thinking, which overlooks the little and mean occupations of the vulgar mind. To the man of philosophical observation, the world appears as a theatre, in which the busy actors toil and weary themselves for his amusement. He sees the emptiness of many objects which are ardently pursued; he is acquainted with the false glitter that surrounds him; he knows how short and unsubstantial are the good and evil that excite all the ardour of pursuit and abhorrence; and can therefore derive a degree of delight from reflection, of which they who are deeply, and even successfully interested in them, can never partici-

pate. Notwithstanding the charms of opulence, yet have Socrates and Epictetus attracted more admirers, and probably enjoyed more tranquillity of mind, than the richest publican of Athens and Rome.

It is true, that learning should be pursued as a qualification for the several professions of civil life; but excluding the motives of interest and ambition, it is to be cultivated for its own sake, by those who understand and wish to enjoy, under every circumstance, the utmost attainable happiness. Next to religion, it is the best and sweetest source of comfort in those hours of dejection, which every mortal must sometimes experience. It constitutes one of the most solid pillars to support the tottering fabric of human felicity, and commonly contributes as much to virtue as to happiness.

No. LII. *On the Excellence of Lord Bacon as a Moralist.*

No acts are so truly our own as those of the understanding. The world has long agreed in admiration of Alexander, Cæsar, and Charles of Sweden; and the remark of Cicero seems not to have occurred to them, that the glory of a general is in great measure derived from the merit of those who obey him, and that a thousand contingencies must conspire to give efficacy to the best concerted plans of military operation.

But the works of genius are commonly produced in solitude. The mind forms its own design, and

pursues within itself all the methods that conduce to its accomplishment. Fortune has little influence in retarding or promoting its purposes. If, then, the proportion of glory, which ought to redound to an individual, is to be estimated by personal merit, independently of external aid and accidental events, the triumphs of ingenuity must be held more honourable than the triumphs of valour, and a conquest of the intellectual world more worthy the dignified page of history, than the subjection of the terraqueous globe. Such a conqueror is the great Bacon; and when the world shall have corrected its erroneous judgment, he will be placed in a rank superior to the son of Philip.

A popular historian of England has, however, depreciated the merit of this glory of our nation. Hume has plainly pronounced him inferior to the Florentine philosopher Galilæo; and he attributes the great applause that has been paid to him, to the illiberal partiality of our national spirit. Something more reasonable than the suggestions of this spirit will prompt many to attribute his detraction to national envy.

The testimony of foreigners, who cannot be biassed by this prejudice, is truly honourable to our great philosopher. Baco Verulamius, for so they call him, is more frequently mentioned, and with higher applause, than the ingenious philosopher of Italy. Great as have been the praises bestowed on Bacon in his own country, they have never reached the high encomiums of foreign universities.

It was the great mistake of Aristotle to have accommodated his physics to his logic, instead of rendering his logic subservient to his physics; and, as the critics have observed, by inverting the natural order of things, to have subjected the end to the means. To remove this error, our philosopher in-

vented his *novum organum*, in which he teaches to reason by induction; a more effectual method of eliciting truth, than the antiquated and trifling forms of a perfect syllogism. This work is acknowledged to be his master-piece; and the beneficial effect it has had in ascertaining science, by reducing it to the test of experiment, is alone sufficient to entitle him to all the fame he enjoys.

But his predominant excellence in promoting the science of nature, seems almost to have absorbed his glory as a moralist. His genius, however formed to penetrate into all subjects on which it directed its beams, made those discoveries in common life and common manners, which, it might be supposed, would be less likely to occur to the deep and recluse speculator than to the man of business. In all his moral writings there is a solidity of remark, which enables the reader to select something useful on every perusal. It is this original and substantial excellence, which gives a grace to his writings, not to be deformed by a style by no means uniformly elegant; though Sir Richard Baker, whose taste, however, was not equal to his knowledge, asserts of it, that Bacon has written in so sweet a style, that, like manna, it pleases every palate.

Men of profound science commonly excel more in judgment than in wit. But Bacon is acknowledged to have displayed a very considerable degree of wit in his moral lucubrations. Rapin says, there is more of it in his ethics, than in any of his writings; for which, I think, a reason may easily be assigned. Observations on men and manners admit a playful ingenuity of thought; but the features of severe science are not often to be relaxed by the sallies of a sportive fancy.

I have often regretted, that so sagacious an understanding was not more frequently employed in

speculations more generally useful, than those sublime subjects of science which are unconnected with practice. Had he employed that subtilty of observation, in remarking and describing manners, which is conspicuous in some useless conjectures in natural philosophy, there is little doubt but the world would have received great light, where light is most wanted, in the art of regulating our passions, and the conduct of life. The little he has left us is an invaluable treasure; and the works I should most wish to recover, if all his productions were lost, is the Moral Essays.

The Advancement of Learning, though much less read than the superficial works of later times, is one of the most entertaining and improving books in the language. The remarks in it strike the mind with such an evidence of conviction, that the truth discovered pleases like that derived from mathematical demonstration. The thoughts of Bacon have this peculiar excellence, that they not only please and convince by their justness, but lead the mind to think still farther on the subject, and assist it in its efforts. Not like the trifling writer, who is forced to make the most advantage of a good idea by dilating it, as the gold-beater extends a little gold; Bacon leaves the reader to comment on a solid reflection, when he has once given it utterance in a clear and concise expression.

His reputation as an historian, though great during his life, seems gradually to have declined, and is now nearly lost. His reign of Henry the Seventh is only read by those whose veneration for him induces them to acquaint themselves with all his works.

Whatever defects the prevalence of a bad taste may have occasioned in some of his productions, we may compare them all together to a venerable pile

of Gothic architecture, which though it has not to boast the grace of Grecian elegance, or the finery of the Chinese style, possesses a solidity and substance, which will cause it to endure when not one stone shall be left upon another in the edifices of a more refined or ostentatious taste.

When we compare this great man's writings with some of the weaknesses of his life, we are tempted to exclaim with a modern delineator of characters, Alas, poor human nature!

No. LIII. *On the Choice of a Profession.*

Much has been said on the necessity of discovering the genius at a puerile age, and of consulting nature in the choice of a profession. Yet, after all, chance usually determines the boy's destination.

It is, indeed, by no means easy to find in the child the distinguishing excellence of the future man. The mind, in the course of a few years, appears to undergo a total renovation. Different faculties, like different trees, put forth the blossoms which presage the fruit, at earlier or later periods, according to some interior arrangement, which eludes research. They who have taken the most pains to learn the natural propensity of the young mind, and have been led by some striking appearance to choose a future employment for it, have found their pupils no more skilful or successful, than those who were directed to the same plan merely by fortuitous circumstances. Few parents,

and few superintendants of education, are capable of forming this judgment; a judgment that must proceed from an intimate knowledge of the human heart, and a long experience of the changes produced in it by time and accidents.

But it is less difficult to discover the advantages and disadvantages of the various employments of life, than to point out those who are formed by nature to fill them with honour.

The clerical profession seems to be well adapted to promote the happiness of him who can command his passions, and who is of a contented disposition. Such an one is a christian philosopher, and possesses the agreeable privilege of instructing his fellow-creatures in moral, philosophical, and religious truths. He is at liberty to pursue one of the pleasantest and the most tranquil paths of life, that which leads through the quiet, yet diversified regions of learning. He is usually respected much more than those whose birth and fortunes have placed them in a higher sphere. He is more a master of his time, that invaluable possession, than the rest of the busy world, because his engagements are at an appointed season. But if to accumulate money, either from the necessity of providing for a family, or from avarice, be his object, he will find himself miserable, because he is placed in a situation, where his desire cannot often be gratified with ease and honour. The stipends of the most useful part of the clergy, those who officiate, are often not greater than the earnings of a hircling mechanic. Yet an appearance of a competency must be supported by the curate, not from pride alone, but from a laudable design of accomplishing the purposes of his profession. In vain will he preach, in vain will he set a good example, if a mean appearance and mode of living contradict the received opinions of congruity, and produce

contempt. There are indeed rich preferments; but these, it is observed, do not usually fall to merit as the reward of it, but are lavished where interest and family connexion put in their irresistible claim. They seem, in this age, to be considered as supplemental provisions for the younger brothers of opulent and noble families. He, therefore, who has neither interest nor connexions, must learn, when he enters on this profession, to view the goods of this world in the light in which they have been considered by the wisest and the best of mortals.

More families have been raised to civil eminence by the study of the law, than by any other pursuit. Riches and honours have been profusely accumulated on its successful professors. The multiplication of statutes, and the variety of forms in modern times, have indeed rendered the study uncommonly intricate and laborious, and it seems therefore to merit uncommon rewards. But distinguished success is necessarily confined to few, and many have worn out a good constitution in perusing books of all others the least amusing, without any return of honour or of profit. In this age the profession is overrun by the multitude of nominal, if not real students. Formerly the heir to a good estate was brought up to little else than fox-hunting, and to be in at the death, and to water the *quorum* ten miles round, were the objects of his highest ambition; but now he is usually entered at an inn of court, advised to read Blackstone, and called to the bar. And though he should never succeed there, yet it is certainly better to let a young man have a profession to employ his thoughts, than to suffer him to live in idleness and vice. When, after a life of useful labour, the advocate is rewarded with a judge's appointment, his labour does not cease. Ease, his

proper recompence, remains still at a distance. Perhaps, during the time of business, there are few employments more irksome and unhealthy. The truly valuable rewards are indeed seldom obtained in the law, till age and application have weakened the powers of perception; and when these are decayed, what are external advantages? Upon the whole, we may conclude, that though the profession of the law, when attended with success, is lucrative and well adapted to raise and establish a family, it is seldom consistent with personal tranquillity.

The preparation for the practice of physic, is by no means agreeable. A philosopher may indeed attend a dissection with pleasure, as affording an opportunity for the observation of nature; but it must always be disgusting to view the loathsome objects of an infirmary. Yet this discipline is necessary; for books alone are of little use. After all the expense and labour of education, it is mortifying to the sensibility of merit to observe those chiefly encouraged, who have little else to recommend them than confidence and external grace of behaviour. He whose solid knowledge induces him to speak with diffidence on the success of a prescription, is thought by the generality less able than the bold pretender. With all his physiological knowledge, if he has not the address to conciliate the whims of fashion on his side, his sense of feeling will seldom be soothed by the grateful application of a fee. Men of sense may respect him, but he must be enriched by old women and fools. When, however, he is sufficiently employed, it must be an additional pleasure to the natural satisfaction of success, to find his own emolument arising from giving ease to the distressed. Yet it is by no means adviseable, that any should be trained to this profession, who do not possess such a degree of independence, as may

enable them to be easy under the neglect of a capricious world.

The army affords a fine asylum for those spirits, which are too restless for domestic life. But though it has many charms for a warm imagination, it seems little adapted to give solid comfort at any time, much less in the season of infirmity and in old age. It is happy for the commonwealth, as things are now constituted, that the acknowledged gentility of the profession obliterates the sense of its hardships.

Still less suited to afford tranquil pleasure, the navy is yet always supplied even by those who have ease and affluence at home. To be confined with a crowd for many months in a wooden machine, is a situation which nothing but use and example could render tolerable. This lot, however, must fall to some; and it does not appear, that they to whom it has fallen are less happy than the rest of mankind. Providence wisely fits the disposition to external circumstances.

The employment of merchandise is commonly esteemed less liberal than any of these; and it is true, that the preparation for it, and the arts of keeping and improving money, have a tendency to contract the sentiments. The professions have some connexion with public spirit, with science and philanthropy. The trader's views seem to centre in private emolument; and, though he is highly beneficial to the community, it seems not from intention; on the contrary, he appears ever ready to take advantage of it without injury to his character, and consequently to his interest. Yet it must be confessed, that, in our commercial country, and in the present age, the mercantile orders have frequently shown themselves truly honourable and enlightened; and he would act imprudently and ridiculously, who should slight a good opportunity of introducing

his son to a successful merchandise, merely beeause it has not been held so liberal as the profession of him who starves with a doetor's degree.

All the oeeupations of life are found to have their advantages and disadvantages admirably adapted to preserve the just equilibrium of happiness. This we may eonfidently assert, that, whatever are the inconveniences of any of them, they are all preferable to a life of inaction; to that wretched listlessness, whieh is constrained to pursue pleasure as a business, and by rendering it the objeet of severe and unvaried attention, destroys its very essenee.

No. LIV. *On Affectation of the Character of Sportsmen.*

ANIMALS that are hurtful to man, and are therefore destroyed by him, seem to have an instinctive knowledge of their enemy, and avoid his approaeh before they ean have experieneed his power or his contrivance. Man likewise possesses a eounteracting instinct, which leads him to the reeesses of the forest, and bears him with alacrity through all the dangers and fatigues of a chace.

This instinct was neeessary to his subsistence, as well as defence, in the savage state; for the prey that he eaught was his only food. Implanted in his eonstitution, it eontinues to operate with great force, even when he is advanced to a state in which his wants are supplied by the inventions of civilised life.

In our country, where every improvement of life is carried to an exalted height, the instinct of the hunter is certainly not obliterated by the new propensities superinduced in a state of civilization. There is scarcely an individual of those who are not refined to a very uncommon degree, who delight not in the sports of the field. The rich must not flatter themselves with an idea that their taste is peculiar to themselves; for there is really no taste more vulgar, and more prevalent among the lowest orders, than the taste for destroying noxious animals, protected by the legislature for the amusement of the wealthy. The mechanic leaves, without remorse, the employment which is to support himself and his family, to follow the Esquire in the chace of a fox, and would rather shoot a pheasant or insnare a trout, than earn a guinea. The glee with which he recounts the adventures of the pursuit, proves it to be a pleasure congenial to his heart.

A wise politician, who did not wish to monopolise the delights of the chace, would encourage this natural propensity among the vagabond and the unemployed. For besides its utility in the destruction of vermin, it tends to infuse a spirit, a hardiness, and a subtilty, well suited to qualify such persons for the dangers and the hardships, the contrivances and the stratagems, of a naval and military life. A man who is excluded from more liberal employments by the lowness of his station, may render himself a useful member of society by catching moles and hares, rats and foxes.

But it is really no less ridiculous than lamentable, that the heir to an estate, the man of education, should forego the honours and pleasures of social, civil, and literary exertions, merely to enjoy the delight of joining a pack of hounds in the destruction of a helpless animal. Yet the truth is, this in-

stinct, as I venture to call it, operates with great violence among those whose opportunities for improvement might enable them to subdue every less laudable relic of savage humanity.

The nobles of our land, whose example might have a salutary influence in disseminating every useful quality, are sometimes destitute of all ideas of excellence beyond the sphere of a stable. They indeed indulge their propensities of this kind without control. The laws are on their side, and the poor man is prevented from destroying the vermin that fattens on his substance. The game-laws are, however, confessed by those who enact them, to be a disgrace to an enlightened age. At the same time that they infringe on liberty, they argue a very considerable degree of barbarism.

The love of rural sports, with all their appendages of horses, dogs, and jockies, is at present carried so far, that the gentleman by birth labours to lower himself to the rank of a huntsman, and even dresses himself in the garb of an ostler. It would not, in the present day, be surprising to meet a privy-counsellor or a judge in the exterior of a whipper-in.

And why should they be censured? says the pretender to superior reason. Is a man less honest or less learned, according to any difference in his dress? It is certain that, if the world were filled with philosophers, it would be a circumstance of little moment. But every thing that lowers the great in the eyes of the vulgar, injures society by disturbing the settled climax of subordination. The vulgar are awed into submission by no methods so effectually, as by a respectable outside. Were a clergyman, for instance, to ascend the pulpit in the dress of a jockey, such a dress as some are seen to wear on the week-days, he might speak with the tongue of

an angel, and yet be disregarded. His appearance, even on other occasions, in the livery of a sportsman, though it may make him pass for a knowing one, and recommend him to his patron, will degrade him among his parishioners, and render his order contemptible.

The influence of dress on manners is considerable, though not much attended to by the moralist. Horace indeed relates, that when Eutrapelus wished to do any one an injury, he gave him fine clothes. The cause of an effect thus produced in the disposition by the external habit, is, that the mind insensibly adopts something of the character it personates. There is a natural love of congruity, which insensibly causes the behaviour to correspond with the dress. He who assumes all the externals of low life, will soon exhibit proofs of internal abasement. If the peer condescends to spend his days in a stable, and to dress like his groom, he will soon differ from him in those circumstances alone which render his degeneracy more conspicuous and detestable. It will not be thought calumny to assert, that our own times have exhibited some melancholy examples of this disgraceful humiliation.

A taste for the pleasures of the race is indeed justified by the example of a most refined people. But the Greeks, it is imagined, did not adopt it as affording an opportunity for gaming. In our age and nation, it is warmly patronised by the illustrious and noble, not from liberal but mean views; and it is frequented by those infernal wretches, whose profession it is to take advantage of their superiors folly. And these, by a strange event, are admitted to familiarity with the great, whose wealth they pillage, and whose principles they corrupt. The

stand, or gallery at a horse-race, has been very justly likened to a Pandæmonium.

Rural sports, also, when not pursued with an attention greater than their importance will admit, nor as the business of life, afford a healthy and a manly relaxation. But when all the circumstances which relate to them are considered with a seriousness, and pursued with an ardour, which momentous business only can justify, the moralist cannot help lamenting that so much useful industry is misplaced. When they lead the rich and liberal into company and occupations which degrade their dignity, he cannot but express an indignant sentiment. He sees with regret, at a time when national virtue is particularly required, some of those who have most influence in a nation, totally engaged with dogs, horses, and grooms.

To value a noble animal for its use, to admire it for its beauty and swiftness, to love it for its generous alacrity in the service of man, is natural and reasonable. It is indeed the mark of an amiable disposition, to observe and to be pleased with the manners and actions of the poor animals whom nature has subjected to our command. If fidelity and generosity are lovely qualities, the dog and the horse have a peculiar claim to a share of affection. But they who circumscribe their ideas within the verge of a stable, who prefer the company of their irrational animals to the society of a fellow-creature, seem to be in danger of gradually assimilating with the nature of their beasts, and of acquiring a degree of brutal ferocity.

No. LV. *On the Vanity and Folly of departing from our proper sphere to become Authors and Orators, without previous and sufficient preparation.*

It has been observed, that the writer who declaims against vanity, is probably at the same time, under its influence. There are however some species of vanity, which, in comparison with others, are not only excusable, but almost laudable. The vanity of wishing to appear in print, when the person who entertains it has been well educated, and is free from the necessity of attention to any particular business for his support, frequently operates as a stimulus to industry, and industry seldom fails of becoming, in some mode or other, beneficial. If he, who is really a student by profession, feels an ambition to become an author, though he should fail through the defect of his abilities, yet he cannot be said to have acted out of character; neither does it often happen, that the time and attention, which he has given to his work, is ruinous to himself or family: for study is his employment, and he has been labouring in his vocation. He has innocently amused, and perhaps improved himself, though unable to communicate with success these advantages to others. His vanity may be pardoned, though the fruits of it cannot be praised.

But it is common in this age to find traders, and even manufacturers of a very subordinate rank, so fascinated with the brilliancy of literary fame, or so overrun with what has been called the itch of scribbling, that they devote that time and thought to

tagging wretched rhymes, or penning paltry prose, which ought to be spent in providing food and cloathing for themselves and their families.

The unfortunate man, who has once contracted this lamentable distemper, immediately feels an aversion for his trade or manual employment. He considers himself as a great natural genius, who has been brought up by his injudicious parents to a business far beneath him, and for which he is totally unfit. He is too delicate for hard or disagreeable labour, and too volatile for the phlegmatic employment of a counter or a counting-house. But it is a certain truth, that we seldom succeed in the mode of life which we do not love; and distress of every kind is the certain consequence of this misplaced industry.

I wish the literary trader or mechanic to consider, how very much out of character a student by profession would appear, were he to invade the province of the workshop, and to lay down the pen and the book for the chisel or the hammer, or the last, or the needle, or the trowel. He would succeed but ill in his studies, if he chose to spend his time at the counter and in the warehouse, instead of the library; and the trader and mechanic may assure themselves, that, notwithstanding the flattering suggestions of their own vanity, they usually appear no less absurd, and succeed no less unhappily, in writing verses, than the student would in making a shoe, or retailing cheese and haberdashery.

This unhappy rage for wasting paper is not only attended with the loss of fame, but of money. The materials necessary for printing, and the modes of announcing the important production to the public, are unavoidably attended with considerable expense; and, alas! the sale is usually so inconsiderable as scarcely to pay for the wear of pens, and the con-

sumption of ink. But it is really lamentable to see that money unnecessarily expended on paper and print, which ought to go to butchers, bakers, brewers, and chandlers. I cannot help thinking it a benevolent action, when the periodical publications treat productions, which originate from such authors, with sarcasm and ridicule. Though the lash of criticism may make the simple culprit smart for a little while, it may have a most beneficial effect on him, in saving him and his family from starving. A mercantile or mechanical author swelled with fancied importance, and neglecting his business in pursuit of literary fame, would furnish no bad topic for theatrical ridicule. Indeed, any effectual method of exploding a folly, which is so pregnant with misery in private life, is greatly desirable; and no treatment can be so effectual in suppressing what originates in vanity, as that which mortifies it most, contempt and ridicule.

But this literary madness of the trading and mechanical orders displays itself in various symptoms. If it produces many writers, I believe, it produces more orators. They who cannot write, or at least cannot spell, are more inclined to let their genius evaporate by the volubility of the tongue than of the pen; by which method their defects in the science of orthography are concealed in elegance and pathos of elocution. The subjects are invariably politics and religion. If they can read, they derive political arguments from newspaper essays, and religious from Bolingbroke, Tindal, and the rest of that low and contemptible set of writers. If they cannot read, they succeed better still; for then the arguments must necessarily proceed from immediate inspiration. The scene in which these rivals of Cicero and Demosthenes chiefly shine, when they defend religion is in the fields near

Bedlam; and when they fight against church and state it is in those schools of oratory, which lately enabled London to vie with Athens.

Now, I wish I could prevail on those redoubtable rhetoricians to be hearers as well as speakers, and to listen to a very powerful and pathetic species of oratory, the cries and distress of a family at home, reduced to a state of starving, while the orator, instead of mending soals and heelpieces, or vending small wares, is disgorging nonsense on an audience of fools, who must be even more foolish than himself, if they are able to listen to him with patience.

To all writers and orators, who might be much more usefully and honourably employed at the anvil or the loom, in the shop or the counting-house, I will recommend the consideration of how many requisites are necessary to form a distinguished writer and a good orator. No man can communicate what is valuable to others, unless he has himself previously accumulated a plentiful store. A liberal education, and much reading and reflection, superadded to a competent share of natural ability, can alone enable a writer to produce what may deserve the attention of a polished age. More leisure than can fall to the lot of those who live by mercantile or manual industry, is necessary to attain an eminence in literature. And with respect to the oratory which some of the lower orders are so fond of affecting, it is usually a habit of vain and noisy babbling, little dissimilar to the ravings of madness, and not unfrequently leading to it. I have myself seen the dreadful effects of methodistical enthusiasm. Many an honest taylor or shoemaker has turned preacher, and hurried himself, and many of his hearers, into absolute lunacy. And even that kind of speechifying, which some persons in the mercantile walks of life are so fond of displaying in clubs,

committees, and associations, often tends to no other purpose but to waste time, and fill the speaker with a self-conceit, which sometimes terminates in his ruin by giving his ambition a wrong direction. I am well assured, that a misplaced attention to letters, and a foolish vanity in scribbling in newspapers and periodical repositories, has contributed greatly to increase the number of advertisements in the London Gazette.

Nothing can be more laudable than that merchants, traders, and mechanics, should fill up their intervals of leisure in reading books adapted to their various tastes, abilities, and previous improvements. But they must be cautious, lest the charms of literary pursuits operate upon them in such a manner as to bring on that fatal distemper, the scribbling itch, or the rage of oratory. The manuscripts which they should delight in composing should be day books, ledgers, bills, and letters to correspondents, and their rhetoric should chiefly be displayed behind the counter. The more of these the better; but when figures gives place to rhymes, and posting to prosing, beware of a commission of bankrupt.

The evil which I endeavour to remove is really a serious one. The poor scribbler or prater may be a very good man; but his weakness, in this respect, will probably involve him in miseries which weakness alone cannot deserve. His ill success as an author, followed as it will be with slights, ridicule, and censure, must be to him a perpetual source of vexation. Thus his favourite pursuit terminates in disappointment, and his necessary pursuit, his trade or employment, on which he depends for bread, fails to supply him, because it is neglected.

It is one of the best ornaments, as well as the surest means of success and happiness, in all the branches of the mercantile life, to be steady in an

attention to what is called the main chance. Letters may form the amusement of the trader, not his business. But letters will soon be the business of his life, if he devotes himself to composition, and learns to pant for literary fame. Letters, pursued within proper limits, will give his mind an elegance, and prevent it from being contracted by a constant attention to lucre; but cultivated with the ardour and constancy of a professed student, they seldom fail of bringing on a complication of distress, to which their satisfactions cannot be a counterpoise. It would not be a bad rule, if merchants and manufacturers, who feel an inclination to poetry, and other literary labours, were always to make a point of providing for their wives and daughters, before they think of devoting themselves to those fantastic and extravagant mistresses, Thalia, Melpomene, and their seven sisters.

No. LVI. *Hints to those who are designed for a Mercantile Life.*

It is no wonder that many fail in their employments and professions, when it is considered by what slender and childish motives they are often fixed in the pursuit, which is to continue for life. One boy admires a red coat and a cockade, or a pair of trowsers and a jacket, and therefore he will be a soldier or a sailor. Another thinks it cannot but be a perpetual source of happiness to live amidst a

profusion of plums and sugar, and therefore he will be a grocer. An early and accidental association of ideas is formed, by which happiness is united with some peculiar mode of life, and a choice is made before reason or experience can possibly have suggested a cause for judicious preference.

The choice of boys at an early age is certainly too ill founded to direct their parents in fixing their future mode of life. What success can be expected in a plan of conduct which originates in the whim of an infant? A parent therefore must study the disposition of his child, and endeavour to conform it to that profession or trade, to which he has the best opportunity of introducing him with advantage. The young mind may be moulded like wax, with a due degree of skill, to almost any figure.

In an insular country like ours, where a great part of the commodities consumed by the people are imported, trade must of necessity constitute the employment of the majority. I consider it therefore of very great consequence, that particular instructions should be adapted to young persons, whose lives are to be spent in the engagements of commerce. They are usually fixed at the desk and the counter, at so early an age as almost to exclude all instruction, but that which relates to the confined views of one particular occupation. Were I to offer advice to a young man intended for the commercial walk, I would address him in a manner somewhat similiar to the following. It is impossible that what I say should be exactly accommodated to all circumstances and situations; but yet it may suggest to all such hints as are capable of improvement and particular application.

"The wisdom of our ancestors has prescribed, that "seven years shall be spent in learning the exer-"cise of a trade or a mechanical art. This like

" many other of their institutions, which the vanity " of the present age is apt to despise, is founded on " substantial reasons. Supposing you to begin at " fourteen, seven years bring you to the age of " twenty-one; a period, at which it is quite early " enough to assume the liberty of manhood. Nor " indeed can those habits be formed with certainty, " which are to continue during life, in a shorter " space.

" Seven years, however, it must be confessed, " are a very considerable portion of life at any age, " and particularly valuable in the vernal season, " when the seeds of every amiable and useful quality " are to be sown and cultivated. You will therefore " be particularly careful to employ it in a constant " application to useful pursuits.

" The knowledge of your particular business will " claim, after your moral and religious duties, your " first and longest attention. Be not afraid of in- " curring among your companions the appellation " of a dull cit or a spiritless plodder. Such names " are usually the poor consolations of those, who " envy the happiness which must attend the pro- " priety of your conduct. Proceed therefore in " the regular performance of your duties, animated " by the approbation of your own heart, and of " your friends and superintendants, and despising " that ridicule which originates only in malice, " though it has been sufficiently powerful to ruin " many. I need not inform you, that writing, " arithmetic, book-keeping, and all the particular " mysteries, as they are called, of your particular " occupation, will leave you little time for inaction. " The less, indeed, the better. Vice and misery are " almost the certain consequences of your not " knowing how to employ your time. Great cities, " where commerce is chiefly carried on, abound

" with temptations, and few are found more fre-
" quently in the haunts of debauchery and dissipa-
" tion than clerks and apprentices.

" Since however it is impossible but that you
" should have some leisure, I very seriously recom-
" mend it to you to acquire a taste for good books;
" I say good books, for you may injure your mind,
" and ruin your fortune, by an indiscriminate and
" improper choice. The readers in your way of
" life seldom read any thing but novels, plays, and
" licentious productions of every species. Besides
" that these have a tendency to corrupt the morals
" of young men in general, they have usually an in-
" fluence peculiarly hurtful on the mind of the
" young trader; for they almost invariably repre-
" sent the essential virtues of a trader, such as
" honesty, sobriety, punctuality, and industry, as
" contemptible and ridiculous. The very name and
" character of a trader appear in them in a low and
" vulgar light. The object held out as a model for
" imitation is usually some dissipated rake, who,
" with every vice and unfortunate failing which tends
" to make himself miserable, and to break a parent's
" heart, is represented as a fine fellow, and as the
" object of love and admiration.

" Let me intreat you to summon resolution
" enough to avoid such reading till your judgment
" is mature, your passions regulated, and your
" principles formed. If you have been fortunate
" enough to have acquired a little knowledge of the
" classics at your school, preserve and improve it.
" Read and reflect upon the histories of Greece,
" Rome, and your own country. There are books
" of morality in the English language as full of
" entertainment for a mind unvitiated as any
" novel.

" A taste for good books will have a happy in-

" fluence on your temper, and will tend to secure
" your conduct, not only by filling up your time in-
" nocently, but by suggesting to your mind wise
" rules and useful maxims. They will teach you
" to know yourself and your situation, and to set a
" just value on those things which ignorant avarice
" and ambition pursue with restless avidity, and at
" the same time without any genuine enjoyment.
" They will enlarge your views, and give you a
" liberality of sentiment and manners. If you at-
" tend solely to the means of getting money, your
" mind will gradually become narrow. You will
" consider money as the only good. Your eyes and
" your heart will be shut to all those other objects
" of delight, with which the God of nature has pro-
" fusely furnished the residence of his favourite
" creature. This is an enlightened age; and the
" man of fortune, but illiberal mind, must be pitied,
" despised, and neglected. He will find few asso-
" ciates, but among those who are as vulgar as him-
" self, and whose riches, if they possess riches,
" cannot render them respectable. But moderation
" is necessary in that which is laudable, and while I
" recommend to you an attention to letters, I must
" remind you, that they are only to form your re-
" creation and not your business. Be contented
" with reading. Beware of scribbling verses when
" you ought to be posting your accounts. A little
" applause bestowed on your rhymes may be your
" ruin. It may give your ambition a wrong object,
" and lead you astray, like the dancing vapour of a
" misty evening. Be cautious of raising your ideas
" above your situation. Dare to be what you really
" are; and, if you think your situation and cha-
" racter require to be elevated and adorned, elevate
" and adorn them yourself by exemplary behaviour.
" If you wish to become respectable, you will suc-

" ceed by raising the sphere in which you are placed, " but not by showing, that you think it too humble " for a person of your exalted ideas.

" You must beware of entertaining too early the " fatal affectation of shining as a fine gentleman " and a man of pleasure. To support these cha- " racters, supposing them consistent with innocence, " a fund of money is absolutely necessary. It can " be procured only by importuning and offending a " parent, by incurring debt, or by fraudulent prac- " tices; each of which methods is almost a certain " source of ruin and infamy. Add to this, that he " who is always adorning his person, and frequent- " ing theatres, assemblies, and public gardens, will " be so over-run with folly and vanity, that no room " will be left for the solid virtues of the sober citizen. " Before the expiration of his apprenticeship, he " will probably grow sick of his trade, get an en- " signcy, if his father can afford to purchase one, " and, if not, turn strolling player, and at last, in- " stead of becoming an alderman, or a respect- " able private citizen, degenerate to an infamous " swindler.

" I consider the manner in which a Sunday is " spent in a great city, by the young men who are " trained to trade and merchandize, as a matter of " the highest consequence to their happiness. The " master and mistress of the family are then usually " at their country-house, or engaged in some rural " excursion. There is no restraint and no amuse- " ment at home. The apprentice or clerk is glad " to make use of his liberty, and to fly from the soli- " tude of a deserted house. Parties of pleasure are " formed; improper and even vicious connexions " made; and the poor young man often dates his " greatest misfortunes from that day, the institu-

" tion of which was designed to increase the virtue " and happiness of mankind. Part of the day may " be very reasonably and usefully devoted to inno- " cent relaxation; but let that part consist of the " intervals between divine service, or of that which " remains at its conclusion. Sunday affords a fine " opportunity for indulging an inclination for read- " ing; and I have no doubt, but that, after a few " hours spent in this decent and profitable manner, " there would be more pleasure than in galloping " along the city-road, and driving a high phaeton to " Richmond or to Windsor.

" I have been thus particular in suggesting advice " to you for the conduct of an apprenticeship, be- " cause good conduct during that dangerous period " is a very promising presage of future success. I " make use of the word Apprenticeship, though I " know that many are introduced to the superior " houses of merchandize without the form of in- " dentures, and without a limited term of prepara- " tion. But whatever time is spent in preparation, " and whether it is spent at the counter or at the " desk, the hints which I have thrown out may, I " hope, be sometimes serviceable. If they save " but one out of a thousand from ruin, I shall be " amply repaid.

" I will add but one more rule, and that shall be " a general one. Learn to place a due value on " the plain and homely qualities of common honesty, " punctuality, diligence, and œconomy. Were " these pursued with half the ardour with which " the graces are courted, and the vices adopted, " there would be fewer bankrupts than there are, " notwithstanding the American war. Bad times " are indeed injurious to commerce, and so also are " bad manners in the conductors of it. When both

" are combined in a remarkable degree, it is not to " be wondered, that there are complainings in our " streets.

" With a mind enlightened and enlarged by " proper education, and a heart furnished with " sound principles, if you have fair opportunities, " you will not often fail. You will probably rise to " that honourable character, a British merchant, " who has acquired opulence with unshaken in- " tegrity, and who is able to enjoy and adorn it with " a noble liberality."

END OF VOL. XLI.

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